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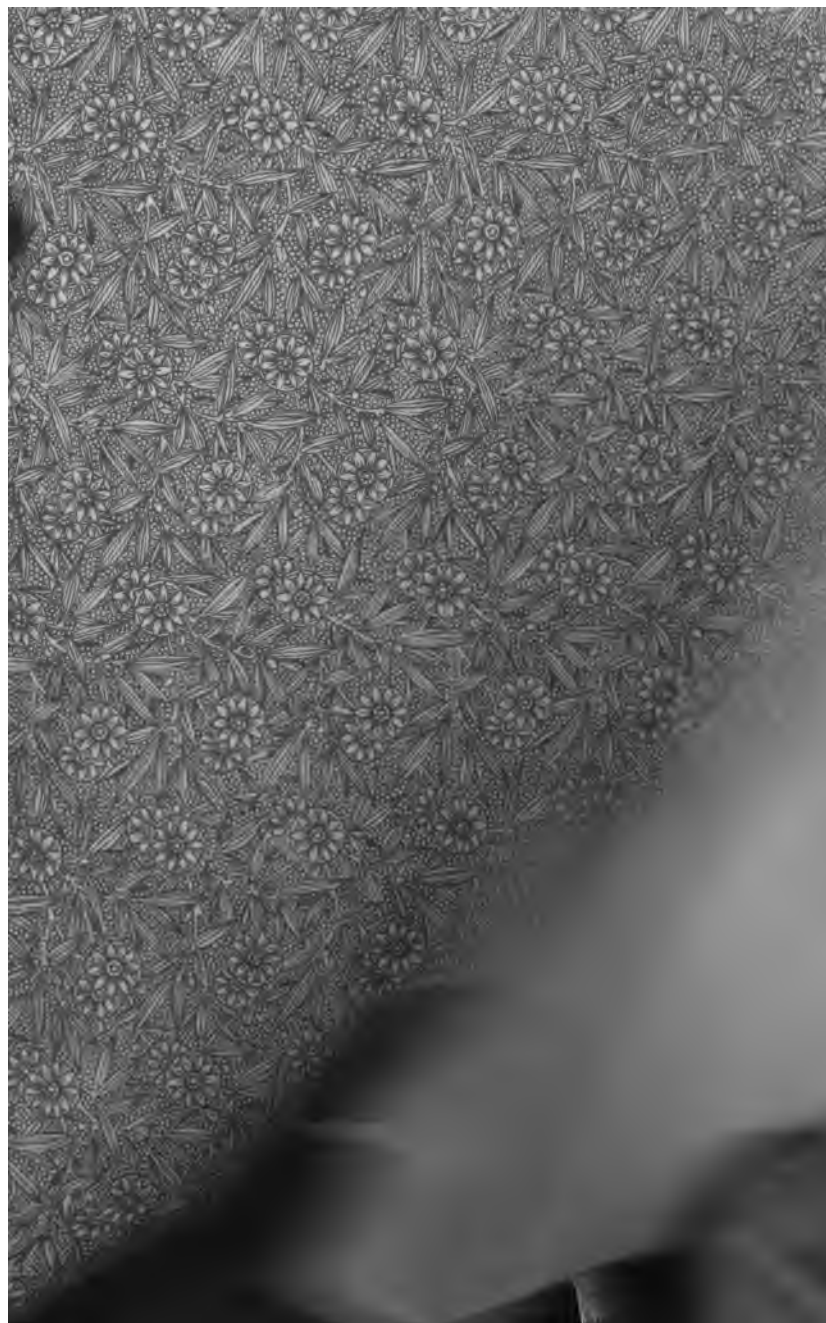
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MARRIED  
AND SINGLE



EMILY ORR







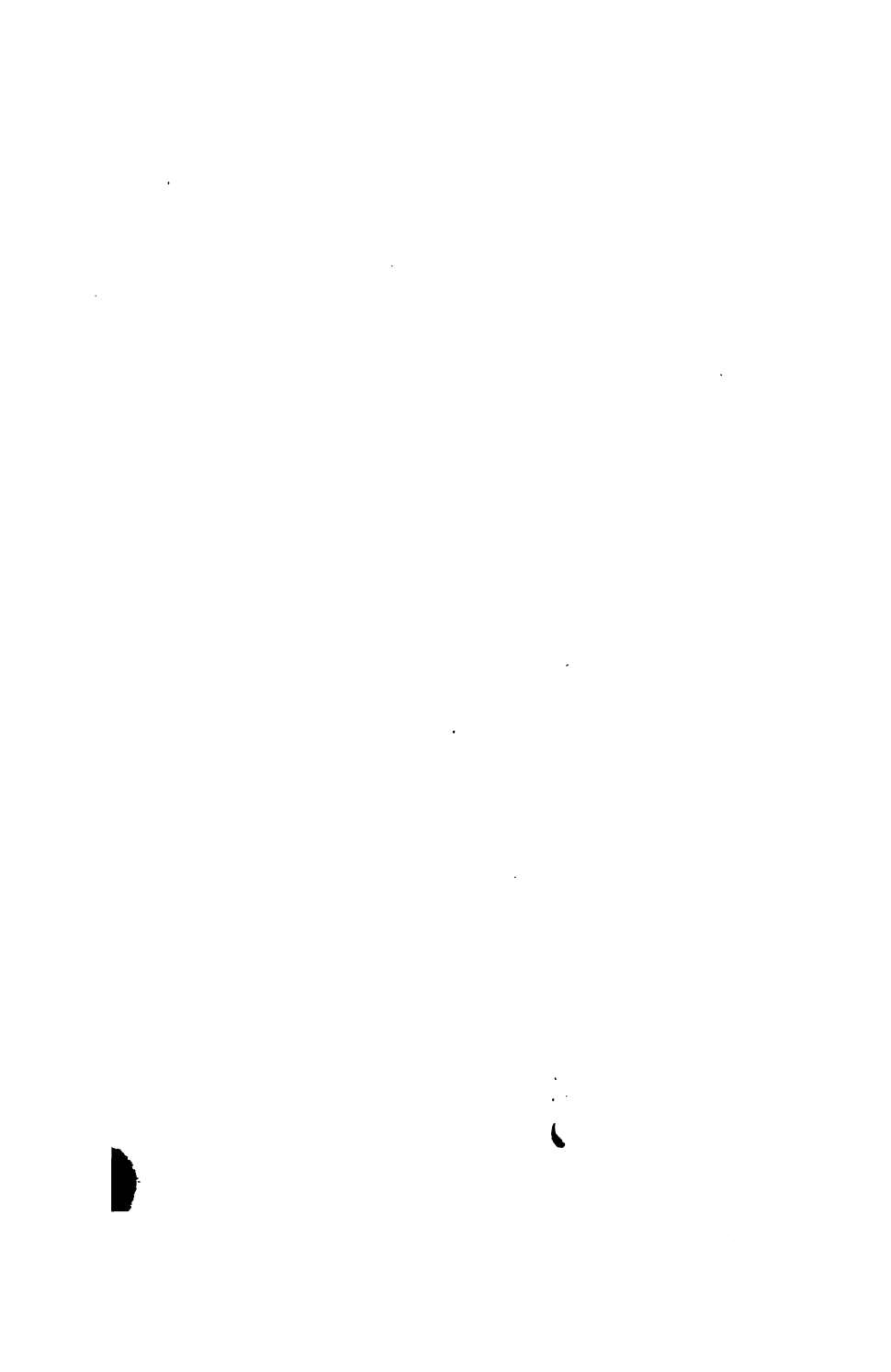
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**MARRIED AND SINGLE.**





# MARRIED AND SINGLE

*A NOVEL*

BY

EMILY C. ORR.

Love will ever play a great part in human life to the end of time ; it will be an immense element in its happiness, perhaps a still greater one in its sorrows, its disasters, its tragedies.—*The Life of Spenser.*



LONDON:

WALTER SMITH, 34 KING STREET.

1882.

251. 2. 264.



TO

MY FATHER AND MOTHER

IN

LOVE, REVERENCE, AND GRATITUDE



# MARRIED AND SINGLE.

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## CHAPTER I.

When all the world is young, lad,  
And all the trees are green ;  
And every goose a swan, lad,  
And every lass a queen ;  
Then hey for boot and horse, lad,  
And round the world away ;  
Young blood must have its course, lad,  
And every dog his day.

KINGSLEY.

"WELL caught! No; he's missed it."

"That is three for them at least; they will beat us yet if we don't take care."

"I never saw Veryan in better form; there is no playing against him; besides, his team is an unusually good one."

Such remarks might be heard from time to time from various groups of people, assembled in the beautiful grounds of Endellion Castle, the property of Lord Veryan, to watch the closing cricket-match of the season—that of Married *v.* Single. The play in itself was nothing remarkable, for the cricketers consisted almost entirely of villagers, with the exception of one or two friends brought by the Captain of each side—the Honourable Audley

Veryan being the head of the Single, while Captain Markham, the agent to the estate, superintended the Married. This match, however, had long been considered the great event of the year at Endellion, it having been instituted when Audley Veryan first entered the Eton Eleven. Lord Veryan threw open his house and grounds for the day, while many from the surrounding neighbourhood came to wander over the beautiful gardens, and to see the collection of valuable pictures and other works of art contained in the Castle.

The poor were also gladly welcomed, and as they appeared on the cricket-ground they were greeted cordially by Lord and Lady Veryan and their daughter, Lady Irene, who moved from group to group, recognising many old friends, and inquiring kindly for the absent.

A broad river ran through the park, on which might be seen little boats with gaily covered awnings, provided for the amusement of those who did not care to watch the cricket. Several tents were scattered here and there, with flags flying from them, while the cheerful strains of a military band added to the enjoyment of the spectators.

The "married" cricketers were distinguished by crimson caps, while those of the "single" were of pale blue, a custom which, by the wish of Audley Veryan, was followed as closely as possible in the costume of the spectators of the fair sex. Many were the pleasantries exchanged between the belles of the village and their admirers upon the prospect of "changing colour" before the next year's match, and the well-known fact that many

proposals had taken place on this opportune occasion rendered this match an unusually popular one.

"I never wish to see no better play than what I've seen to-day," remarked one old man to another who was watching the game with keen interest; "why, it's my belief our young master could beat all the players in London, and off his own bat too."

"His batting's good enough," replied the other, "but to my mind his fielding's the best. It's the finest thing I ever see to watch him a-running after the ball; he do go so quick and so nimble-like, there's none about here can come up to him."

"And for all that he's no conceit about him, that's what I like," added a younger man who joined them.

"When we was practising last night, 'George,' says he to me, he says, 'I wish I could bowl as well as you' (not but what he makes a very good offer at bowling himself). He's the sort of gentleman I like, he's ready to say a kind word to one just as if he wasn't the son of a Lord."

"Ah!" said the first speaker, shaking his head solemnly, "I only wish there was more like him, I do. There's that Mr. Robson, who has just taken Park House, and who's so taken up with those 'orses of his. My son works in the stables, and he tells me his master speaks to him just as if he was the dirt under his feet. They all hate him, I know, and he's nothing so grand either, for I've heerd as how his father kept a shop in London."

In another part of the ground was seated Mrs. Markham, the pretty little wife of Captain Markham, dressed



in white, with crimson ribbons, and a crimson rose fastened in front of her dress. She was surrounded by a group of the lesser magnates of the neighbourhood, Mrs. Oldman, the doctor's wife, Mrs. Mayhew, a widow, living in the village of Endellion, and others, who took a lively interest in their neighbours' concerns, and were anxious to glean from her what tidings they could of the sayings and doings of "the aristocracy," as they always called the Veryans.

"I fear this will be an anxious moment for you, Mrs. Markham," remarked Lord Veryan, as he approached the group. "I see your husband has just 'gone in,' but we may expect him to distinguish himself, as he always does."

"I am sure I hope he will, my Lord," replied Mrs. Markham; "but don't you agree with me that cricket is a very unfair and one-sided game? We have just been saying that it does not seem right for only two men to be playing on one side and eleven others all against them. I think that ought to be altered," she continued, with a little laugh, glancing at Lord Veryan, as if he could not fail to be struck with her remark. To her disappointment, however, he merely smiled, saying, "I do not quite know what your husband would say to such a proposal," and passed on. A few moments after, loud clapping and cheers from the ranks of the "single" signified that some event had taken place.

Captain Markham, the best player of the "married," had been bowled the first ball, and soon after walked disconsolately towards the place where his wife and her friend were sitting.

"Poor Charlie," she exclaimed, "I am so sorry for you ; but never mind, dear, I am sure your turn will come soon again, if you only wait for it."

"My turn !" answered her husband, "why, don't you know that this is the second innings ?"

"I am afraid I do not know what the 'second innings' means," replied Mrs. Markham innocently.

"My dear Violet, how can you be so foolish, after all the trouble I have taken to initiate you into the mysteries of cricket ? Why, have I not taken you to all the best matches at Lords and Princes, and yet you seem to know as little about it as ever."

"But, Charlie, dear, I think it would be a great pity to waste one's time watching the cricket at Lords. I always give myself up to enjoying the society of my friends, and to studying the marvellous costumes to be seen there ; one never has such an opportunity elsewhere."

Her husband, however, was too absorbed in watching the game to notice her remarks. Presently Audley Vryan approached them. He was tall and fair, with a light active figure, large grey eyes, and a pleasant smile. His genial manners made him universally popular, and he excelled in all manly sports, cricket, hunting, and lawn tennis, though he cared little for the admiration he received, and remained utterly unspoiled by it. He stood leaning on the railing that fenced off the ground, while another of the opposite side was preparing to go to the wicket.

"Allow me to congratulate you on your good play,

Mr. Veryan," said Mrs. Markham; "I hear you have been doing great things to-day."

"Thank you," he replied, taking off his cap; "but I shall not be satisfied until I can play as well as your husband; he made some splendid catches, and, as you know, I missed a very easy one."

"I am sure my wife knew nothing about it until you mentioned it," replied Captain Markham. "I cannot succeed in making her understand the game at all."

"You are not like my sister Irene," remarked Mr. Veryan; "she delights in cricket, and knows the place of every one in the field as well as the captain of an eleven. She used to be a capital player, in my schoolboy days, and she always comes down upon me if I do not distinguish myself to her satisfaction."

"How proud he is of his sister," said Mrs. Oldman, as he walked away; "how he will miss her when she marries."

"Yes," replied Mrs. Markham, "they are devoted to each other, and the separation will be still greater, for I hear Captain Leighton's regiment is ordered to India."

"I am sorry to hear that," remarked Mrs. Mayhew, "for she is a nice creature, and we shall all miss her. Indeed I think, considering their rank, that the whole family are very affable. I am sure you agree with me, Mrs. Oldman."

"Yes I do, Mrs. Mayhew, and I think we are very fortunate to have such members of the aristocracy resident amongst us. As for Lady Irene, when she comes down

after the London season, she always calls to tell me all about it, and what she has been doing, and brings my invalid daughter, Mabel, the pattern of some new work, or something to interest her, and she always asks how Johnnie and Harry are getting on at school."

"Lady Katherine is very different," said Mrs. Markham; "she is so brusque and off-hand, and has not the charming manners of her sister, but I hear she gets on very well in Ireland, and is much liked there."

"I daresay she suits those wild Irish people," replied Mrs. Oldman; "I have never been in that country myself, nor do I ever wish to go, for I'd be shot from behind a hedge to a dead certainty. But Lady Katherine seems to like it, and she only laughed when I asked her if she was not afraid of her tenants murdering her."

"My mother has sent me to ask if you will not come into the tent for some tea," said Lady Irene, who approached the group at that moment, and thus put an end to all further discussion.

## CHAPTER II.

Better to hunt in fields for health unbought,  
Than fee the doctor for a nauseous draught.  
The wise, for cure, on exercise depend,  
God never made His work for man to mend.

DRYDEN.

THE family at Endellion Castle consisted of the Earl and Countess of Veryan and their four children, two sons and two daughters. The eldest son, Lord Harcourt, was in the diplomatic service, and now held an appointment at St. Petersburg. Lady Katherine, the eldest daughter, had married some years previously Sir Percival Fitzgerald, the owner of a large property in Ireland, and she, with her husband and their little daughter Dorothy, were now on a visit at Endellion. Audley Veryan, the second son, we have already described ; Lady Irene, the youngest, was tall and slight, and much resembled her brother Audley. She had a graceful figure, beautiful golden hair, and regular features, with an expression of quiet, calm happiness in her large grey eyes.

The morning after the cricket-match the party at the Castle were engaged in talking over the events of the preceding day.

“How well Captain Markham played in the first inn-

ings," said Lady Irene; "I was afraid there was no chance for our side when I saw his score; I felt very sorry for him, however, when he went out first ball, nothing is so aggravating."

"What a little fool his wife is," remarked Lord Veryan; "why, she made such ridiculous remarks to me about the game yesterday, that I really had no patience with her. I wonder Markham does not either try to teach her something about it, or make her hold her tongue."

"I wish women were not always saying such silly things," replied his son, "and then expecting us to laugh as if they had said something very amusing. For my part, I never speak to Mrs. Markham if I can possibly help it, for though she is pretty enough she always bores me. I am sorry for it too, for Markham is a first-rate fellow."

"She appears more silly than she really is," said Lady Irene; "I think she has been brought up in rather a second-rate set, among people who consider it clever to laugh at everything, but often when I am alone with her she is sensible enough."

"I see Irene has not lost her old habit of white-washing people," remarked her brother-in-law; "if she wishes to be eccentric, and as unlike the rest of the world as possible, she had better stick to it."

"My dear Percy," she replied, laughing, "I really cannot allow you to be so cynical. I have a much better opinion of the world than you have. I think it a delightful place. People are so pleasant and friendly, and always seem glad to see one; I have never found them as disagreeable as you

imagine, and I am sure very few are capable of all the faults you constantly attribute to human nature."

"One expects optimism at twenty-one," replied her brother-in-law, "especially in an Earl's daughter accustomed to admiration from her cradle, and now engaged to such a piece of perfection as Captain Leighton; but wait a few years, Irene, and see if your creed has not somewhat changed."

Irene was about to reply, but her sister interrupted her.

"Never mind what Percy says, Irene; I never think of attending to him when he makes such remarks; it is only 'papa's way,' as Dorothy says, whenever he does anything that important little personage happens to disapprove of."

The conversation then turned upon various autumn plans, Lady Veryan having decided that it was necessary for herself and her husband to visit Homburg and drink the waters, though they were both in excellent health. She was accustomed to regard everything and every one from a medical point of view, and was never happier than when some of her melancholy predictions concerning the health of her friends were fulfilled.

"Ah!" she would say, "poor dear Mary! I saw it coming on long ago, and I remember saying to Irene at the time that I thought her far from strong; if she had only consulted Dr. Parsons, as I advised her, it might never have come to this. I always think 'a stitch in time saves nine,' and that 'prevention is better than cure.' If more people would follow my example of having their

family doctor to call in every morning before he goes his rounds, I feel sure much illness might be prevented."

"I am afraid, dear Audley," she remarked to her son on the morning of which we are speaking, "that you are over-tired with your exertions yesterday. I am sure you are doing too much. I wish you would give up cricket, and take to some quieter amusement."

"Give it up, mother! when I am to play for the county to-morrow, and for the 'Zingari' next week, and my eleven is the best in the neighbourhood! I should be very sorry indeed to give it up; besides, plenty of exercise does one more good than harm."

"Yes, Audley, exercise in moderation, a quiet ride or walk, or an occasional game of lawn tennis, if you do not get over-heated; but to run about all day under a hot sun, as you do at cricket, and never to sit down or rest when you are tired, cannot be good for any one. Doctor Oldman told me only yesterday that he had known many young men's constitutions ruined for life by over-exertion in athletic sports, so you cannot wonder that I feel anxious when you persist in playing so much."

"Why, mother," exclaimed her son, laughing, "you agree with the immortal poet in thinking that

'All the world's a hospital,  
And all the men and women merely patients;'

but I promise you not to bring myself to an early grave or, what would be far worse, to fall into Doctor Oldman's hands through my devotion to the noble game of cricket."

Lady Veryan smiled, but added in a warning voice—



"Indeed it is no laughing matter, Audley ; I only wish I could persuade you to be more careful."

"I will come to the rescue, mother," said Lady Katherine, "and carry him off from the dangers that await him. I want to persuade him and Irene to return with us to Ireland, for there will be capital shooting, and I will tell Percy to see that he does not walk too far, and that he sits down when he is tired. I think you can trust him to us."

"All right, Kitty," replied her brother, "we will come and explore the wilds of Oriel Court, but Irene must come too. I decline to be separated from her during the short space of time she still belongs to me."

### CHAPTER III.

A lovely valley beneath her lay,  
And that land had glens and mountains grey,  
And that land had valleys and hoary piles,  
And merled seas, and a thousand isles :  
The fields were speckled, its forests green,  
And its lakes were all of the dazzling sheen,  
Like magic mirrors, where slumbering lay  
The sun, and the sky, and the cloudlet grey.  
KILMENY.

SIR PERCY FITZGERALD'S property was situated in one of the most beautiful parts of Ireland, on the shores of a lough, stretching for twenty miles inland. In some parts it was several miles wide, but in others scarcely a mile across. The country on each side was beautifully wooded, the trees reaching down to the water's edge, while little islands covered its surface, some large enough to be inhabited. The inhabitants living on the shores of the lough were accustomed to an almost aquatic existence, the poorer class being composed chiefly of fishermen and boatmen, who conveyed passengers and goods from the islands to the mainland. Their richer neighbours possessed yachts, and sailing and rowing boats of various kinds, and Lady Katherine Fitzgerald declared she had no longer any use for horses and carriages, as every one seemed to live on the water.

Oriel Court, the Fitzgeralds' place, was situated on a hill overlooking the lough, a fine deer-park, broken here and there with picturesque stretches of gorse and bracken, extended for some distance along the shores of the lough, while the broad terrace-walk in front of the house commanded a magnificent view of the surrounding country, including the sea in the distance, and a long line of deep blue mountains, whose summits were generally concealed by clouds or mist.

"Really, Percy, this is a lovely place," exclaimed Lady Irene to her brother-in-law, a few days after her arrival in Ireland. "I admire it more and more each time I come here, and I think Katherine is very fortunate in having such a beautiful home."

"I am very glad you like it," he replied. "You don't belong to the usual class of *nil admirari* English people, who, when they come to this country, spend their time in comparing it with their own, and telling us how far we are behind them in civilisation. Perhaps if England had gone through as many wars and disturbances she would not have been so civilised after all."

"Now, Percy," said his wife, laughing, "that is a dangerous subject. When once you begin upon the wrongs of Ireland I never know when you will stop! But, really, I am as glad as you can be that Irene appreciates this country. She is delighted with our people, and is thinking of giving a practical refutation to the old appendix to English advertisements, 'No Irish need apply.'"

"Yes," answered Irene; "I have thoughts of taking

your pretty Bridget back with me as my maid, if she will come, and I hear she would like to go to England. I wish," she continued, "that our country people were as easy to get on with and as friendly as yours; why, every time Katherine speaks to them they say something amusing. There is old Mrs. Peters, who is as good as Mrs. Malaprop, she told us yesterday she knew 'the family' had returned, for 'she had seen the carriage carousing about the country.'"

Sir Percival laughed, saying, "Yes, but you should ask her to tell you of her expedition to Ballykillen to be photographed, and how a man looked at her through 'a chimera' till she felt quite frightened."

At this moment Audley Veryan entered the room asking his brother-in-law if he were ready to start on the shooting expedition that had been planned, and saying he thought there was no time to lose, as he saw clouds gathering over Sleive Knock, which was by no means a good omen for the weather.

"That learned gamekeeper of yours," he continued, "has just informed me that he thinks 'Jupiter Pluvius will be at it again,' if we don't make haste."

"I see you have already become acquainted with some of Macpherson's classical allusions, Audley," replied Sir Percival; "he often alarms my friends with his questions, and his display of knowledge. Like many Scotchmen, he has received an excellent education, and is not backward in showing it."

After the shooters had started, Lady Katherine proposed

to her sister to pay some visits in the afternoon to some friends who lived farther down the lough.

"It is a long way round by land," she said, "so if you do not mind, Irene, we might sail there, for I think the tide will suit both for going and returning, and we have not been on the water since we came home."

Accordingly 'The White Swan,' a pretty little sailing boat, was ordered to be ready directly after luncheon, when they started, attended by two sailors, Lady Katherine steering.

"Is it safe, Kitty, to trust yourself to steer, without Percy or some one to help you?" asked Irene, timidly.

"Safe enough, my lady," answered Pat Murphy, one of the sailors, before Lady Katherine had time to reply; "why, her ladyship knows every rock and tide and current in this lough, just as well as any of us. 'Deed, and if you'd seen her steer this same 'White Swan' at the Ballykillen Regatta, and bring her in first into the bargain, you'd not be afeard to trust yourself with her; would she now, Tom?"

"Sure and she wouldn't, now," replied the other sailor.

At this reliable testimony Irene was obliged to feel reassured, or rather to conceal her secret fears, for she was not as intrepid as her sister, nor as fond of the sea, and, in spite of her endeavours to the contrary, all kinds of stories of shipwrecks, and of pleasure-boats capsized in sudden squalls, came unbidden to her mind.

Away they went, however, the boat dancing merrily over the waves, with the spray dashing in their faces,

while every now and then a fresh breeze would spring up, and the side on which Irene sat would come rather nearer to the edge of the water than she liked.

"How delightful!" exclaimed Lady Katherine; "this is a thousand times pleasanter than crawling along a dusty road, behind two lazy old carriage horses. But you look very pale, Irene."

"I shall be rather glad when we land, and still more glad when we are safely at home again, for it seems to me very rough."

"Dear Irene, I am so sorry you do not like it; we will not sail again if you would rather not; but indeed it is not rough, there is only just enough wind to fill the sails, and we are almost at our destination."

A short time after, much to Irene's relief, the boat entered a little harbour, where they landed, and walked towards a large house at a little distance.

"I think you have never been at Faynetower before," said Lady Katherine; "Sir Michael could not afford to live here, so he has only lately returned to the neighbourhood. An old aunt left him a little money, which he will probably spend as rapidly as he spent his own fortune, and yet have nothing more to show for it. You know the family consists of Sir Michael and Lady Fayne, neither of whom I care for, and an only child, Beatrix, a beauty, and a great flirt, whom I rather like; let us hope she will be at home, and not her mother."

On ringing the bell, however, they received the unwelcome intelligence that Lady Fayne was at home. Through

a large hall, whose chief decoration consisted of hunting-whips, with an occasional fox's brush and a few sporting pictures, they were conducted into a long, low library, where Lady Fayne generally sat. The room was wainscotted with old oak, and contained cabinets of valuable china, while portraits of various ancestors appeared on the walls. The chairs looked more antique than safe, the old Turkey carpet was worn threadbare, the table seemed in a state of confusion, covered with letters, bills, a torn copy of *Handley Cross* and the last new novel, while amidst all lay a formidable-looking copy of *Bridge's Expositions*, with a broad blue ribbon marker.

After waiting for nearly a quarter of an hour, Lady Fayne appeared, apologising for her delay, saying—

"I was at the school superintending the religious instruction, for I cannot say I approve of that given by Mr. Everard. His views upon baptismal regeneration are wholly erroneous, and what a sad thing it would be if error was to creep into those young minds unawares!"

"I have always liked Mr. Everard's sermons," replied Lady Katherine, "and so has Sir Percival; but I am sorry to hear you consider his teaching unsafe."

"Ah, Lady Katherine, you are no judge; you were brought up in England, probably under some ritualistic clergyman. I hope, my dear, you are sound?" she continued, turning to Irene.

The latter blushed at being so suddenly addressed, and never having heard the expression applied except to a horse, replied simply, "Yes, thank you, I am quite well."

"I am glad to hear it, my dear, I am glad to hear it; but that is not what I meant; it is your soul, and not your body, I was inquiring after. In these days young people are exposed to so many dangerous High Church tendencies, that I think it my duty to warn them whenever I can." -

Irene was at a loss for an answer, but fortunately she was saved the trouble of replying by the entrance of a tall, very handsome girl, dressed in a riding habit, with her whip and gloves in her hand. Beatrix Fayne's appearance was by no means easy to describe. Those who knew her best said she never looked the same for two minutes together. She was considerably above middle height, and her expression varied with every thought that flitted through her mind, while it was impossible to foretell what she might do or say next. She was a brunette, with masses of black hair coiled round and round the back of her head, her features were irregular, and the chief beauty of her face lay in her large dark eyes, which could assume instantly every expression from a glance of mischievous fun to one of melting tenderness. "Unconventional," "unlike other girls," "quite eccentric," were the epithets applied to her by the mothers and daughters of the neighbourhood, though all their male relations were her devoted admirers;—beauty formed an excuse with them for conduct they would never have tolerated from any one else.

"Beatrix Fayne is an example of the old Spanish proverb, 'One man may steal a horse out of a field while another mayn't look at it over the fence,'" remarked a



neighbouring squire shrewdly, when Beatrix's vagaries were under discussion.

On entering the room she listened rather scornfully to Lady Fayne's last remark, and then proceeded to greet Lady Katherine warmly.

"I'm uncommonly glad you've come back," she said, "for it has been duller than ever while you have been away ; I have had no one to race with, and it is stupid work going out to sail by one's-self. I have hardly been once in the 'Di Vernon' since you left, so I had to take to riding instead, but one does not care much for that either till the hunting begins."

"Where have you ridden to this afternoon?" inquired her mother. "I hope not far, as you would insist on going all alone."

"About ten miles, mamma," she replied carelessly; and turning to Lady Katherine, added, "I had the felicity of meeting Sir Percival and your brother; they had not good sport, so they were rather glad to fall in with me by way of a change, and I went some way with them."

"I want you to come and spend a day with us soon," said Lady Katherine, "while my sister is with me. If you have nothing better to do next Monday, will you come over to dine and sleep?"

"I shall be delighted; you know I always enjoy coming to you."

"That is right," said Lady Katherine, "we shall be very glad to see you, and the children will be greatly de-

lighted at the prospect of a visit from 'Aunt Beatrix,' as they always call you."

"Do you care for horses, Lady Irene?" asked Beatrix, somewhat abruptly. "I should like to show you the hunter papa has just bought for me, and your brother tells me you are a great rider."

"I am afraid he is not an impartial judge," replied Irene, "but we always ride together, and as he is a good rider, I try to profit by his teaching."

After making a tour of the stables, and seeing all the horses, Lady Katherine summoned her sister, saying it was getting late, and they ought to be going, though in reality to free herself from a long and wearisome *tête-à-tête* with Lady Fayne.

"That woman is insupportable," she exclaimed, as after leaving the house they walked towards the boat. "I cannot bear the way she will talk incessantly upon the most sacred subjects, in season and out of season, without the slightest reverence. She is doing Beatrix a great deal of harm by it, for it is just the way to make a high-spirited girl like that dislike religion altogether."

"Yes," replied Irene, "I was greatly surprised at the way in which she tried to catechise me upon my opinions, when I had never seen her before. I only hope, Katherine, you have some better specimens of Irish ladies to show me than those we have seen to-day."

"But you like Beatrix?"

"She is so off-hand, and she speaks to her mother very

disrespectfully ; so I do not think I should ever care much about her, though she is certainly very handsome."

"Never mind, Irene, I will take you to see my paragon, Mrs. Everard, some day soon, and I know you will consider her at least a good specimen of the Irish character."

## CHAPTER IV.

And sure I should pity as well as condemn her, knowing as I do her story, which knowledge, methinks, would often lead us to let alone God's prerogative—judgment, and hold by man's privilege—pity.—LORNA DOONE.

BEATRIX FAYNE'S character was one not easy to understand, but if we go back a few years we may find some clew to her history.

Her father, one of the old race of easy-going Irish squires, had always been devoted to his only child, proud of her beauty, and the admiration she had met with from childhood. He allowed her to have her own way in everything, and thought Beatrix could do no wrong. Her mother, on the other hand, was a stern Scotchwoman, who tried to bring her up on a strictly Puritan pattern, reproving her for every little fault, and insisting upon a rigid observance of the rules she had laid down for her education and conduct.

Possessed of strong religious principles herself, she endeavoured to instil the same into her daughter's mind through the mistaken channel of long Scripture lessons to be learnt by heart, inflicted as a punishment upon the unhappy child, while for the slightest fault she would call

her aside and deliver a long lecture, interspersed with texts, which was heard with angry impatience. The natural consequence was that Beatrix grew up with a profound dislike for religion of any kind, it being only associated in her mind with scoldings and threats of punishment for the most trivial faults, for in her mother's creed the law of fear took the place of the law of love.

Warm-hearted and high-spirited like many Irish girls, she loved her father with a passionate affection, but as she grew older she cared less and less for her mother, between whom and herself there was little sympathy. She delighted in the free wild life that her Irish home afforded her, hunting with her father, riding long distances alone, wandering by herself along the sea-shore, or up the mountain-side, attended only by her great mastiff, "Leo."

This life went on happily enough until she reached the age of eighteen. Sir Michael's property had been paying badly, his rents did not come in as they ought, added to which his extravagant habits had reduced his income to the narrowest possible limits. At last, however, things came to a crisis, a family council was held, and Lady Fayne and their agent both maintained that the only way to avoid immediate ruin would be to sell their horses, let their house, and go abroad for some years.

This plan Sir Michael strongly opposed, saying he would never consent to leave Faynetower, much less to let it to strangers. It had belonged to his family for generations, he had been born and bred there, and he swore he would live and die there.

Beatrix at first sided with him, declaring she would live on bread and water, dismiss the servants, and do all the work herself, rather than submit to the disgrace of leaving their old home to be occupied by strangers. They were, however, at length obliged to give a reluctant consent to the only plan open to them, and they went abroad. They decided to go first to Switzerland. Here it was that Beatrix discovered for the first time the full extent of the powers with which nature had so richly endowed her. Her beauty was undeniable, and attracted many admirers, while her exquisite voice, her brightness and Irish fun, caused her to be universally popular. All this admiration, however, did not spoil her in the least ; she went on her way as naturally as possible, taking all as her due, and thoroughly enjoying it, but without the slightest affectation or conceit.

Among her admirers was a young barrister, Mr. Chamberlain, who had come to Lucerne on his way to the Oberland, where, as a member of the Alpine Club, he intended to add to his reputation by unheard-of feats of mountaineering. He had only intended to spend a few days there *en passant*, but finding an unexpected attraction in the society of Beatrix, he lingered on from day to day. He was young, handsome, and agreeable, accustomed to the best society in London, and with a general courtesy and *savoir-faire* which rendered him a universal favourite.

He devoted himself exclusively to Beatrix, who in return was fascinated by him and his evident appreciation of herself. They were constantly together. By day they

joined in the various expeditions organised by tourists staying in the hotel. They ascended Pilatus, watched the sunrise on the Righi, sat underneath the covered bridges, with their quaint pictures overhead, or rowed on the beautiful lake. In the evening they would sing together in the large *salon*, to the great enjoyment of the visitors, and their voices mingled harmoniously in the old Irish melodies Beatrix loved so dearly, and which she sang with patriotic pathos.

Sometimes, too, when her watchful mother was absorbed in a book or in conversation with an acquaintance, Mr. Chamberlain would induce Beatrix to wander into the balcony overlooking the lake, and there they would watch together the soft moonlight playing on the water, listening to distant music which floated through the night-air, or to the deep tones of the great Cathedral bell.

They spoke little, but they felt that each understood what was passing in the other's mind, and there was no need to express it in words.

To Beatrix life seemed one long dream of happiness. She wished for nothing further than that the present might always exist, without any break or change.

Her whole being seemed irradiated with a feeling she could not explain to herself, though others watching her thought instinctively of the words of her favourite Moore—

“There's nothing half so sweet in life  
As love's young dream.”

Never had she been so loving to her father, so ready to give up any pleasure in which he could not join; never

before had her manner towards her mother been so gentle or considerate.

Once as she was walking towards the town through the old Cathedral cloisters, whose arcades in those days framed the lake into a succession of exquisite views, she met an old gipsy woman, who, struck by her look of buoyant happiness, involuntarily murmured in German—

“Ach wie glücklich du siehest aus! Du wirst recht glücklich sein.”

“How well and happy Beatrix looks,” remarked Sir Michael to his wife; “that young Chamberlain is after her, I’ll be bound.”

“I hope you will not put such ideas into her head,” replied Lady Fayne, sternly; “she is much too young to have such fancies.”

And so time went on, and week after week passed away in a succession of bright and joyous days such as never occur more than once in a lifetime.



## CHAPTER V.

Heigho ! the wind and the rain.

*Twelfth Night.*

THE halcyon days of which we have spoken were destined to be of short duration.

One evening Beatrix Fayne was returning from a sail on the lake with Mrs. Beresford, a young Irish friend of hers, and Mr. Chamberlain, when the latter pointed out the clouds that were beginning to gather in the sky, and remarked they were fortunate in reaching the shore before the storm came on. Coming events cast their shadows before them. On reaching the hotel, they dressed hastily for the *table-d'hôte*, and on taking their places, which were close together, Mr. Chamberlain was greeted by a friend of his who had arrived that afternoon.

"Why, Chamberlain," exclaimed the new comer, "I never expected to find you here! I thought you were at Grindelwald or Zermatt scaling inaccessible heights, and thereby causing much anxiety to Miss Russell, whom I saw only yesterday at Neuchatel."

"Are you going to do any mountain-heights, Leighton?" replied his friend, apparently ignoring the point of the ob-

servation; "I shall be going to the Oberland before long, and we might travel together."

"But I have some news for you which may change your plans. The Russells will be here in a day or two, *en route* for Interlaken, where they intend to anchor for the present, that you may be as near the fair Caroline as possible."

Mr. Chamberlain's face darkened, but turning to Beatrix, he began an animated conversation with her, never pausing till the *table-d'hôte* was ended, and taking no further notice of his friend.

During the evening which followed, Beatrix was asked to sing, when an old Scotch gentleman, a friend of her father's, came up and said, "Let us have 'Hunting Tower,' Miss Fayne; that's a ballad you and Mr. Chamberlain sing so finely together, one would think you were Scotch yourselves."

They complied with the request, and never had their voices blended more perfectly together. They had just sung the verses—

"Ye should hae telt me that in time, Jamie,  
Ye should hae telt me that langsyne, laddie;  
For had I kent o' your fause heart,  
Ye ne'er had gotten mine, laddie.  
Your een were like a spell, Jeanie,  
Mair sweet than I could tell, lassie,  
That ilka day bewitched me sae,  
I couldna help mysel', lassie,"

when a voice from the balcony exclaimed, "Come out every one and look at the lightning; it is magnificent!"

Beatrix rose from the piano, and went to her favourite

corner to watch the gathering storm, closely followed by Mr. Chamberlain. A strange feeling of gloom had taken possession of her mind. They stood together looking out over the lake, the darkness every now and again being lighted up by flashes of lightning. At last she broke the silence.

"Who is Miss Russell, who seems so much interested in your proceedings?" she asked with an effort at gaiety.

"My *fiancée*," was the unexpected reply.

A flash of lightning, more vivid than the previous ones, and a loud clap of thunder followed in rapid succession. Was it this which caused Beatrix to start and tremble violently?

"Yes," he continued, hurriedly, "she is a great heiress, and I am considered very lucky, and I thought so myself. I thought I was in love with her until—"

"Beatrix," said Lady Fayne, who approached at that moment, "do you mean to say you are out here at this hour? Why, you will catch your death of cold. I thought you were in Mrs. Beresford's sitting-room, or I should have called you in long ago."

She followed her mother obediently into the *salon*, without her usual remonstrance.

"Good heavens, Beatrix!" exclaimed her father, looking up from his newspaper, "how white and cold you look! You ought not to have stayed out so long. Go and sing something else, or finish 'Hunting Tower,' for you and Mr. Chamberlain only gave us half of it."

"I am tired, father," she said wearily; "good-night," and left the room.

In the balcony stood Mr. Chamberlain looking out into the night, but so absorbed in his own thoughts that he neither noticed the grandeur of the storm, nor heard the remarks of those who were standing near him.

At some distance his friend, Mr. Leighton, was smoking a cigar, and listening with great interest to a conversation going on in a group near him.

"I never heard them sing better than to-night; their voices harmonise perfectly; but are they engaged, for one always sees them together."

"I believe they were engaged before we came here, for they have been inseparable ever since we knew them."

"All I can say is," continued another, "that he is an uncommonly lucky fellow, for she is the handsomest girl I ever saw."

At this Mr. Leighton moved away, and soon joined his friend, who did not seem to welcome his approach.

"Look here, Chamberlain," he said, "I hear you have been at your old practices again with this handsome Irish girl. I do call it a shame when you are engaged to Miss Russell all the time, but I suppose she knows this?"

Receiving no answer, he continued, "If I was not an old friend of the Russells', it would be no business of mine, but I cannot help caring for you too, for the sake of auld langsyne and our Eton days together. I do call it disgraceful the way you go on with all these girls, one after another, making them think you are desperately in love with them, and never really meaning to marry any of them."

"My dear fellow," replied his friend, "it is not my fault if they lose their hearts to me; besides, they get over it very soon. They enjoy a flirtation as much as I do, and it serves *pour passer le temps*."

Cecil Leighton frowned.

"And do you think that Maude Parker, and one or two others I could name, imagined you only wished to amuse yourself during the time you devoted yourself so exclusively to them each in turn? I only know that Maude has never looked the same since your engagement."

"What nonsense you talk!" replied Frederick Chamberlain angrily. "I am sure it is not my fault, but you have such foolish ideas on this subject, no one can come up to your standard."

"You may call them foolish or not as you like, it does not matter to me, but I do think it a shame to go on like this with a girl when you are engaged to another at the same time."

"It's all very well, Leighton, for you to talk like that. You go in for being high-souled and poetic, and all that sort of thing; but most of the men I know do just the same, and think nothing of it."

"They may or may not," replied Captain Leighton, "but (forgive my plain speaking) I should be sorry to think there were many such heartless flirts as you are in the world. Fortunately, however, this Irish girl, to whom every one says you are engaged, looks much too high-spirited to break her heart about you."

"I'm not going to be lectured any more by you, Leighton, so you may save yourself the trouble," and turning away, Frederick Chamberlain entered the *salon* to put an end to the conversation, while his friend paced up and down the balcony for some time longer.

## CHAPTER VI.

Ah the load of life  
Which lives for hatred ! we are made to love,  
We women, and the injury which turns  
The honey of our lives to gall, transforms  
The angel to the fiend.

THE EPIC OF HADES.

AND Beatrix ?

The storm raged fiercely round the house that night, but a fiercer storm of indignation raged within her breast.

"My *fiancée*."

At first she had been almost stunned on hearing these words, but as the truth gradually dawned upon her she felt their full force with an almost crushing weight.

"How I loved him," she said to herself, "and I felt sure he loved me. Why did he look, and speak, and act as he did, if all the time he was engaged to another girl ? It was wicked, heartless, deceitful, both towards her and towards me. I feel as if I could hate him for it, and yet—"

And then her thoughts went slipping back to all the happy days they had spent together, their excursions on the lake, their walks, their conversations, the moonlight

evenings on the balcony, and his whispered words of admiration, the pleasant re-unions in the *salon*, when they sang together as with one voice, and felt that each knew and understood the other's thoughts, for since they first met he had devoted himself exclusively to her, never leaving her side, and regardless of any one else.

All this was ended, and life could never be the same again to her. With the passionate love of her Celtic nature she had given herself up wholly to one who appeared to seek it, and who had fascinated her as none else had ever done.

Her imagination had clothed him with all virtues and excellencies, and she had worshipped him as a superior being.

And now her idol was shattered, and with it all belief in goodness and truth.

"I trusted him, and loved him with my whole heart," she said, "and he has utterly deceived me. I will never love again, nor will I believe in any human being."

Hour after hour passed. The storm ceased and the wind was hushed, though from time to time it might be heard in a low moan as it swept fitfully round the house. At last even this sound died away, and all was still and peaceful.

But no peace and no calm came to the wounded heart of Beatrix Fayne.

Poor child! where could she seek it, now that her earthly stay had left her, and she stood alone without faith and without love? Religion could bring her no



comfort ; to her God was a stern law-giver, who cared little for each individual, and who only governed the world by a kind of machinery—what could He know or care about what befell her ?

Had Mr. Chamberlain seen the effect of his conduct, he might have felt some remorse.

All life seemed to stretch out before her in one long dreary expanse of wretchedness—what had she to hope for or to live for now ?

She loved her father ; but what was the affection she felt for him compared with her passionate devotion for the one she thought cared for her beyond any one else in the world ? As for her mother, she thought with dislike of being always subjected to the irksome control from which she had hoped so soon to escape. There was nothing left to make life worth living. Suddenly a thought struck her which seemed to inspire her with new hope—Revenge.

Yes, she would live for this.

She would make men suffer as she had suffered ; she would show them that women could make conquests as well as men—that they could be equally heartless. She would cultivate all her talents for society, her beautiful voice, her charm of manner, her fascinations—of which she was fully conscious—all for this aim. She would not shut herself up and pine away, as some foolish girls did when they were disappointed in love ; she would do something grander than this.

She would become as popular as possible, laying herself

out to attract men—to make them devoted to her, appearing to care for them, and draw them on—and then, when they were completely in her power, she could show how she despised them.

At last the long weary night ended, and Beatrix rose, though without having closed her eyes in sleep. She dressed as carefully as possible, choosing a costume which she knew Mr. Chamberlain especially admired, and determined to show him by her manner that she was perfectly indifferent to what she had heard on the preceding evening.

Still she dreaded the meeting. She feared her face would betray her secret, and that her new resolves would give way on seeing him, and on hearing the voice, every tone of which she knew and had loved so well. On crossing the hall, however, she met her father, who told her Mr. Chamberlain had been obliged to leave that morning early for Flüelen *en route* for Zermatt, and had begged him to say how sorry he was to be unable to bid her good-bye.

At breakfast Captain Leighton sat opposite to them, and being a close observer of physiognomy, he could not help being struck by the change that had come over Beatrix's beautiful face since he had seen it only a few hours previously.

Not only did her features bear traces of tears and of a sleepless night, but the happy tender look he had noticed on first seeing her, which seemed to give an added charm to her beauty, was now replaced by a hard defiant expression, assumed evidently to hide great mental suffering.

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He drew his own conclusions, however, from this fact, coupled with Frederick Chamberlain's rapid flight, and his suspicions were further confirmed by the tone of her reply to a casual remark. They were standing at a window overlooking the garden, a scene of devastation since the late storm, and some one remarked upon the altered appearance it presented.

"All is changed now," Beatrix said quietly, but with a voice so full of pain that Cecil Leighton looked up and saw her eyes filled with tears.

"Poor girl," he said to himself as he left the room; "that fellow is the greatest wretch I know. I declare I will have nothing to do with him in future. Men are punished for injuring the bodies of their fellow-creatures, and they are put to death for taking away life; but I only wish some severe penalty could be devised for those who break people's hearts, and who take from them all that makes life worth anything."

The succeeding weeks and months passed wearily enough for poor Beatrix, and, to add to her misery, she was obliged to remain on the scene of her former happiness.

Her father and mother, who knew nothing of all she had gone through, liked Lucerne, and decided to remain there for the present, though she frequently urged them to leave a place so full of painful memories. Every walk, every scene, recalled thoughts of the past, which she in vain tried to banish from her mind. She found little comfort in her cherished hope of revenge. Men, attracted

by her beauty, were yet repelled by the bitterness she could not conceal, and though paying her much attention, carefully abstained from going further.

"Father," she said one day as she and Sir Michael were resting under a tree after a ramble through the fields, "do you love me?"

"Indeed I hope I do, Trix. Why, who is there I care for as I do for you?"

"Thank you, father: you will promise to love me always, will you not, for no one else does?" she said wearily. "I know I am hard and bitter, but I cannot help it, only I should like to feel that you cared for me."

"My poor child," he replied, drawing her closely to him—and no other word passed between them; but Beatrix felt she was understood, and her father's sympathy comforted her aching heart.

## CHAPTER VII.

Her sentence told  
That no good end could come to her faint yearning,  
That no bright hour should see her health returning,  
That changeful seasons—not for one dark year,  
But on through life—must teach her how to bear.

And teaching how with deepest gloom to cope,  
Bids patience light her lamp, where sets the sun of hope.

THE LADY OF LA GARAGE.

A FEW days after the expedition to Faynetower, Lady Katherine asked her sister to accompany her on a visit to Mrs. Everard, the wife of the rector of Ennis Castle.

"I expect you to be charmed with her," she said. "Beatrix always calls her 'Saint Clare,' and indeed the name suits her admirably. She is the universal confidant and referee of the whole neighbourhood, and, unlike most women, she is not a sieve; whatever one tells her never goes further."

"What a valuable quality!" replied Irene. "I should very much like to see her, for she was too ill the last time I was in Ireland to see strangers."

"Poor thing! she is indeed a constant sufferer," said Lady Katherine, "though she never speaks of it. Those

grand words, 'The absolute incapacity of complaining,' might have been written of her. I do not like visiting invalids generally; they favour you with so long a catalogue of their symptoms, that one begins to fancy one may have every malady under the sun without knowing it; but Mrs. Everard is very different."

"Only one thing you must promise me," remarked her sister, "before I pay any more visits with you; which is, that you will take me on dry land, and not expose me to the perils of the deep as you did lately."

Clare Everard was indeed no common character. At an early age she had married one of the Fellows of Trinity College, Dublin, whose powerful mind and strength of character made him valued by the Dons, while his genial manners and ready sympathy rendered him a universal favourite with the undergraduates.

Much regret was felt when, on his marriage, he accepted a living in an out-of-the-way part of the country, and settled there with his wife. Not long after, a dangerous illness shattered Mrs. Everard's health, and made her an invalid for life; but with true womanly devotion, she thought less of her own sufferings than of her husband's. She therefore tried, by every means in her power, to enter into his pursuits as much as possible. Fearing he might feel the isolation of a country life with only an invalid wife for a companion, she encouraged him to invite many of his friends and others to stay with them; and though she could never leave her sofa, she endeavoured, as far as lay in her power, to make their visits as pleasant as possible.

She induced her husband to travel from time to time, "that he might bring back some new ideas for her," as she told him, and no other reason would have persuaded him to leave her side, even for a day. Unlike most clergymen's wives, her sympathies extended beyond the bounds of her own parish, nor were they restricted to schools, clothing-clubs, and parochial events. She read much, but thought more, keeping up with all the events of the day, while her brilliant conversational powers and knowledge of character rendered her a delightful companion to all who had the privilege of her acquaintance. The rectory was not more than half a mile from Oriel Court. As Lady Katherine and her sister entered the gate, an old woman met them coming from the house, bareheaded, and with an old grey cloak round her shoulders.

"Why, Biddy," exclaimed Lady Katherine, "is this you? I thought you were ill and in bed on Rock Island, and I meant to see you to-morrow."

"Indeed and it's meself, my Lady; and shure enough I was as ill as a body could be only last Sunday. There was me one side of the fire afraid of my life I was going to die, and there was Mick on the other afraid of his life I wasn't; but I'm better now, the saints be praised."

"I hope Mick has been kinder to you lately?" inquired Lady Katherine.

"Thank you, my Lady, I mustn't complain, he's no worse than many husbands; but what I've come over to-day for is to tell my troubles to that blessed angel up at the rectory. Pat's been and run away to sea

without ever staying to wish me good-bye, and I just feel as if my heart would break. Ohone, ohone! my boy! my boy!"

"I am very sorry to hear this, Biddy," said Lady Katherine, "but it may be better for him after all; you know he never liked working at home with his father."

"That's what Mrs. Everard says, my Lady, and she thinks it's all for the best; but, oh! a mother's heart grieves sore for her only son," continued the poor woman, throwing her apron over her head and sobbing.

"Poor thing," said Lady Katherine, but seeing it was of no use to administer any consolation just then, she promised to call and see her soon, and passed on.

Mrs. Everard was truly the friend and confidant of all who knew her. Mothers came to her with household cares and anxieties, and she sent them away calmed and strengthened to bear the burden of life with a braver heart. Young girls confided to her hopes and fears unknown to others, and received wise and loving counsel in return. Men consulted her on every subject, and found in her companionship and womanly sympathy a haven of rest amid the storms of life.

Of her it might have been said, as of Madame Récamier, "*Elle était pour ses amis la sœur de Charité, de leurs peines, de leurs faiblesses, et même un peu de leurs fautes.*"

On reaching the rectory, Lady Katherine and her sister were told that Mrs. Everard was able to see them, but her maid asked them not to stay long, saying she had



passed a sleepless night, and was not so well in consequence.

They entered the drawing-room, and found her lying on a sofa near the window, her beautiful face looking even paler and more suffering than usual. Beside her on a little table stood a vase of old Venetian glass filled with scarlet geraniums and maiden-hair fern, while beside it lay the manuscript of her husband's latest work, which she was assisting him to revise.

On seeing her visitors, her face lighted up with a bright smile of welcome, as she held out both hands towards Lady Katherine, who bent down to kiss her fondly, saying—

“We are not going to stay long, for you look very tired to-day, but I wanted to bring my sister to see you.”

“I have been looking forward to seeing Lady Irene for some time,” said Mrs. Everard, “and I have already heard her praises from Beatrix Fayne, who was with me yesterday.”

“Thank you,” said Lady Irene, blushing, “but I am very sorry to find you little better than the last time I was in Ireland. I fear you are not equal to seeing visitors to-day, and we ought not to inflict ourselves upon you.”

“But it is a great pleasure to me to see you both,” replied Mrs. Everard, “and you must not deprive me of it sooner than you can help; but let us talk of some more interesting topic than my illness, for I make it a rule never to speak of myself unless absolutely necessary.”

“I wish others who are not invalids would do the same,” remarked Lady Katherine, “for old Lady Fayne

entertained me with such a minute account of her rheumatism the other day, you would have thought she considered her case quite unique, and that I was a doctor who made rheumatism his speciality."

Mrs. Everard smiled, and said—

"I hope you may be able to stay until Mr. Everard and his friend return, as he would be sorry to miss you. We have a grave Oxford professor staying with us, and they have gone to see the celebrated Round Tower at Killyfeagh."

"I hope he duly appreciates Ireland," said Lady Irene; "he cannot fail to admire the scenery of this part of the country as much as I do."

"I think he admires the scenery," replied Mrs. Everard, "but apparently he does not find the people as amusing as he anticipated, at least he told us yesterday he thought Irish humour had been much exaggerated, because he had met with very little of it during his tour. Beatrix Fayne, who was here, replied audaciously in Carlyle's words, 'Perhaps not. The eye sees in it what the mind brings to it,' and he looked at her with mild surprise in consequence."

"Beatrix quoting Carlyle!" replied Lady Katherine; "why, I thought she never opened a book if she could help it!"


"She does not read much," answered Mrs. Everard, "but with that strangely complex nature of hers, she seems to be *en rapport* with everything and every one. I never saw such versatility before in any character. She

will flirt desperately with Captain Lane one moment, and discuss horses and dogs as if she only lived for hunting, while directly after she will turn to Mr. Everard and ask him about his Irish history, telling him little facts she has gleaned to interest him, and entering into the genealogies of the O'Neils or O'Connors as gravely and sensibly as possible."

"I do not wonder people find her so attractive," said Lady Katherine, "for besides her beauty she has great charm of manner, which I think is the secret of her fascination to a great extent; but somehow I never feel quite sure of her, she has so many sides that I do not think she can be equally true in all."

"Now, Lady Katherine," said Mrs. Everard, laughing, "that is because you are a Sassenach and she is a Celt. I think English people hardly do justice to the great variety and versatility of the Irish character, and they look upon us as untrue when we are only many-sided. As to Beatrix, I confess I have never been able to fathom her real character. She has been so mismanaged between a father who lets her have her own way in everything, and a mother who is as injudicious as she can possibly be, that I think it is a case of *tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner*."

"I think so too," said Lady Irene, "and I feel sure she has a history. The other day, when some one was talking of a flirtation that had come to nothing, Katherine said, laughing, 'That is the way with most men,' and I saw a fierce, scornful look come into Beatrix Fayne's face, which I had never seen there before."



## CHAPTER VIII.

O there's no friend like a sister  
In calm or stormy weather,  
To guide one on the dangerous way,  
To help one, if one goes astray,  
To lift one, if one totters down,  
To strengthen whilst one stands.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

NEXT to Captain Leighton, the being whom Irene loved most dearly was her only brother. Lady Katherine was six years older than herself, and had "come out" and become her father's and mother's companion, whilst her younger sister was still in the schoolroom. She had married early, and the two sisters had seen but little of each other. Audley Veryan was only a year older than Irene, and between them had existed from childhood a deep attachment, which only strengthened as they grew older. They had shared every thought, and, as far as possible, every pursuit. Irene well remembered the first sorrow in her happy life, when, on her brother leaving for school, she cried as if her heart would break, declaring she would never be happy until his return. When he came back, however, a fresh trouble awaited her. Much to her

dismay and indignation she was forbidden to run races and climb trees any longer with him and his schoolboy friends, or to take any part in the games in which she delighted to assist him. She feared Audley would cease to care for her, and despise her in future as being 'only a girl,' but feminine ingenuity came to her aid, and she soon contrived to become of invaluable assistance to him in the manufacture of kites, paper balloons, etc., at which she worked indefatigably. In return, Audley, who was very fond of his sister, used to save up his pocket-money to bring her home presents in the form of a pet guinea-pig, white mice, pictures of prize fighters, and other objects of equal value, which were highly appreciated by her. His earliest school friend had been Cecil Leighton, who, being considerably older than Audley, had taken the latter under his protection, and saved him from the tyranny of other boys. This had earned Irene's lasting gratitude, and for years she and her brother had regarded him as a superior being, upon whom they looked with awe and admiration.

He frequently spent his holidays at Endellion while his parents were abroad for his mother's health. His father, Mr. Leighton, possessed a considerable property in the neighbourhood of Endellion, which had been in the family for generations. Cecil was his second son, and a general favourite with all who knew him. Irene's beauty had struck him on his first visit to Endellion Castle, and he manifested his boyish admiration by confiding to her his various scrapes, and consulting her as to his choice of a profession.

It was to her he turned for sympathy when, during the holidays, one morning's post had brought him a deep black-edged letter containing the news of his mother's death, and her words of comfort conveyed the first ray of consolation to his heart.

And so they grew on, unconsciously loving and trusting each other more than any one else in the world, until at length, just before Cecil joined his regiment, which was starting for India, he came to Irene, and told her of his love, asking her to be his wife. She no longer concealed from him how deeply she loved him, but many difficulties came in the way, and the course of their true love did not at first run smoothly. For some time Lord Vervan refused his consent, thinking the second son of a neighbouring country gentleman was not a sufficiently good match for an Earl's daughter.

His wife, however, prevailed upon him to sanction the engagement, saying they already loved Cecil as a son, and that she would prefer seeing her daughter married to one she could thoroughly trust, rather than to one of higher rank, of whose character they might know but little.

The marriage was to take place the following spring, and the only cloud upon Irene's happiness was the thought of leaving her brother, who, she knew, would miss her even more than her father and mother. She wished Audley would marry, but as yet he had shown no inclination for any of the desirable "parties" his mother had suggested; he always declared he was married to Irene,

and until she deserted him he should never care for any one else.

He lived at Endellion, as his father would never allow him to enter any profession, saying he required his assistance at home, an arrangement Audley willingly agreed to, as it enabled him to spend the winter in hunting and shooting, and the summer in playing cricket.


His pleasant easy manners and kind heart made him a universal favourite with both rich and poor; the former agreed he was one of the best specimens of the *jeunesse dorée*, while the verdict of the latter was comprised in their favourite sentence, "He'd no pride about him."

A happier, brighter existence than that of Audley Veryan it would be impossible to imagine.

"What are you doing, Irene?" he exclaimed a few days after the expedition to Faynetower, when he found his sister seated under a large tree in the grounds of Oriel Court. "Reading love-letters, I am sure; why, it must be a day's work to get through the volumes you are always receiving from Leighton."

"Well, you inquisitive creature, if you wish to know, I have been reading love-letters, and very pleasant literature I find it. But what has become of you lately? it is almost three days since you have honoured me with your society. I am glad to find you have become self-supporting, and able to do without your valuable sister. I only hope it may continue."

"Don't flatter yourself I want you," said her brother, laughing. "I have only come out here *pour passer le*



*temps*," and he threw himself on the grass at her feet, as he proceeded to light his cigar.

"But the children are in the drawing-room just now, are they not?" asked Irene, "and that ought to be sufficient amusement for you. They are very fond of Uncle Audley."

"That is why I have come out here, to escape from them. It's all very well for poets to write about 'The children's hour,' and say, 'Come to me, O ye children!' but when one comes in tired after a long day's shooting, and sits down in an easy-chair to read the paper, 'the children's hour' is anything but a pleasure."

"Why, Audley, I thought you were so fond of them?"

"Yes, so I am, if they are kept in their place; but really in these days children, or rather their mothers, are becoming perfectly intolerable. For instance, yesterday evening Katherine and I were sitting in the drawing-room about six o'clock talking as happily as possible; all of a sudden Katherine was transformed into an irrational being,—from a sensible sister into a senseless mother. The door opened, in walked a fat nurse carrying what seemed to be an inanimate bundle of white clothes, which she planted on the floor, where it remained rooted like a zoophyte, and apparently without powers of locomotion. The bundle was followed by three children, who precipitated themselves upon Katherine and me with loud cries. Edward, who can hardly walk, kept cruising round the room in a very unsteady fashion, and whenever he approached any point of danger Katherine signalled an



alarm to me, and I had to make off after him, and place him in safety for the time being."

"Poor Audley!" said Irene, laughing, "what an infliction for you!"

"But that was not the worst of it; Charlie would insist on playing 'bo-peep,' in an ostrich fashion, hiding his head in the curtain, and calling out 'Uncle Audley, I'se hid.' I paid no attention, but presently my paper was pulled to one side, and the little urchin called out, 'I see you—'

"'Charlie says he sees you, Audley,' exclaimed his fond mother. "I wish he didn't," I thought to myself.

"'Do pick up Edward,' said Katherine again, and off I had to go. No sooner, however, was he re-instated on his legs, than he made use of them to trot off and find a box of bricks, with which he proceeded stealthily to the back of my chair, and sent them in an avalanche over my head. I could obtain no redress from Katherine, who only laughed, so turning round I shook the paper at him, which startled him, and made him set up a howl. On hearing this, the zoophyte on the floor began to scream, and wave its feelers helplessly in the air, rocking itself to and fro, until Katherine came to the rescue, and placing it erect on her knee, began to put it through its infantine accomplishments.

"'Say mam—ma, baby, say ma—ma. Gee gee, yes—gee gee, good baby.'

"It uttered all kinds of uncanny sounds, which seemed to impart pleasure to maternal ears, but not to mine, so

I vowed I would not be let in for a repetition of the performance, and I made off this evening just as it was beginning."

"Well done, Audley! What a graphic description," said his sister laughing; "but what would Katherine say if she heard you?"

"It would be a good thing if she did; she would learn not to inflict her children on other people as she did on Lane the other day. I saw how it bored him."

"Captain Lane is a great admirer of Miss Fayne's, is he not? I always hear them mentioned together, and Percival has asked him to dine and sleep here next week during her visit."

"Has he?" inquired her brother, taking his cigar out of his mouth. "I'm sure she cannot care for a fellow like that, who has not a word to say for himself."

"Why not?" answered Irene; "he is pleasant and gentlemanlike, and I believe he is devoted to her."

"She is certainly the prettiest girl I have seen for a long time," remarked her brother. "You cannot think how well she looked the other day when Percival and I met her riding: she had a bunch of berries and red leaves stuck in front of her riding habit, and she looked uncommonly well."

"She is very handsome," replied Irene, "and there is something very attractive about her as well."

"Attractive!" exclaimed Audley. "Why, she is perfectly fascinating. I met her yesterday as I was walking near Faynetower, and escorted her home. She has so

much to say for herself; besides, she is not like all those stupid girls about us at home, who, when a man speaks to them, look as frightened as a flock of sheep on seeing a dog. I knew you would like her, Irene, for you always like girls that are worth something. I never knew you to be jealous of one yet. I wish you would make friends with her, and ask her to come to Endellion."

"Take care, Audley," said his sister, laughing; "I fear you will be the next victim."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, you know," replied Irene, "that Miss Fayne is considered very dangerous in this part of the world; there are various *on dits* to the effect that she leads her admirers on to imagine she cares for them, and then throws them over as soon as they declare their affection; and I do not think any girl has a right to behave so heartlessly. Still, there is an indescribable charm about her, such constant variety in her looks and manner, one can never foretell what she will say or do next, I do not wonder people are fascinated with her."

"But why should she care for the fellows about here?" asked her brother. "I think she shows her good sense in refusing them, for any I have seen are highly uninteresting."

Irene was silent; she had said as much as she could for Miss Fayne, whom she had frequently heard spoken of as a heartless flirt, a specimen of humanity with whom she had but little sympathy. The one great love of her life, beginning as it did at a very early age, had kept her heart

true and simple, devoted to the only man she had ever loved, and this feeling made her stern in her judgments of those who cared to reckon their list of conquests and to take pleasure in a number of admirers.

She secretly dreaded that her favourite brother should fall in love with one whom she considered unworthy of him, fearing he would share the usual fate of Miss Fayne's admirers, or, if not, that she would only accept him for the sake of his rank and position.

She longed to shield him from these dangers, but felt powerless to avert them.

Audley had as yet passed unharmed through the ordeal of match-making mothers and designing daughters without losing his heart to any one, which made his sister doubly anxious when she saw him manifest so great an interest in Miss Fayne. She did not know what course to pursue, as she feared he might attribute any warnings to female jealousy, an attribute wholly foreign to her nature; and, on the other hand, she could not stand by and see him made a victim without some effort to save him. On consideration, however, she thought it better to wait for a little and let things take their course, hoping that something would avert the misfortune her imagination depicted, though she knew her brother too well to think that he would be easily dissuaded from anything on which his heart was really set.


## CHAPTER IX.

She is one in whom good women suffer, and have their truth misinterpreted by her folly. She is so taken up by faith that she has no room for charity, and understands no good works but what are wrought on the sampler. She derides those that are not her preachers, and she censures all sermons but bad ones. She is one that thinks she performs all her duty to God in hearing, and shows the fruits of it in talking.  
—JOHN EARLE'S MICRO-COSMOGRAPHIE, 1628.

THE love existing between Beatrix and her father was the only softening influence of her life; but for it she would have become utterly hardened by her sorrow. With her mother, as we have seen, she had little or nothing in common.

Lady Fayne's stern Scotch character had little sympathy with her daughter's passionate and impulsive nature. While Beatrix was a child she had brought her up as strictly as possible, but finding this useless as she grew older, she had relinquished all control except to find fault continually with her doings.

On their return to Ireland, after a few years spent abroad, they found Mr. and Mrs. Everard settled at the rectory, and though Lady Fayne continually criticised his doctrine as "unsound," and condemned his practice



as "a mere trust in good works," her daughter found a pleasure and happiness in their friendship such as she had never before experienced.

"They are the first people who have made me believe in the goodness and truth of human beings," she remarked one day to her mother, who immediately reproved her for "putting her trust in any child of man."

"You are going to call on Lady Fayne!" exclaimed Lady Katherine Fitzgerald one day on meeting Mr. Everard in the neighbourhood of Faynetower. "I wish I could accompany you and listen to the edifying theological arguments into which you will certainly be entrapped."

Mr. Everard smiled, and answered that he was going to consult Sir Michael upon some parish business, but that he feared Lady Katherine's prophecy would come true before his departure.

On arriving at Faynetower he was ushered into the drawing-room, where Lady Fayne received him, and on asking for Sir Michael, he was told that he was superintending the cutting down of some trees in the park.

He proposed to join him, but Lady Fayne interposed, saying she would send a servant to tell her husband, and begged him to sit down, as she had something to say to him. Seeing there was no possibility of escape, her guest was obliged to acquiesce, though with some reluctance.

"I am glad to have an opportunity of talking to you quietly," began Lady Fayne, "for I want to ask if you are taking any steps about finding a curate. I feel very

strongly, and so does Sir Michael, that this large parish requires two clergymen to work it properly. I know you do your utmost, but I think we ought to consider the spiritual welfare of the people."

"I hope I feel that as strongly as you do," replied Mr. Everard; "but among the many who have applied to me lately, I cannot find one that I consider altogether satisfactory."

"But, my dear Mr. Everard," said Lady Fayne, "how can you say that when I myself recommended Mr. Chapleton to you? I consider his discourses the most moving I have ever heard, and his views upon faith and works are all one could possibly desire."

"Yes," remarked Beatrix, who entered the room at that moment, "his views consist of unlimited faith in himself. The last time I heard him preach in Dublin, he discovered, on entering the pulpit, that he had forgotten his sermon, so he coolly assured his congregation that in consequence of this he would have to depend upon the Lord for his discourse, but in the evening he hoped to come better prepared."

Mr. Everard could not help smiling, but Lady Fayne said sternly—

"Beatrix, I am ashamed of you; how can you be so flippant?"

"I fear," interposed Mr. Everard, to avert any further discord, "that Mr. Chapleton thought his talents would be thrown away here, and quite buried in the country. He has good points certainly, but I think his character is being ruined by the adulation he meets with from his

present congregation, who look upon him as a piece of perfection, an estimate he seems willing to accept."

Beatrice looked at her mother triumphantly, but Lady Fayne replied with severity—

"I am sorry I cannot agree with you, Mr. Everard. I consider him an excellent young man, and I only wish there were more like him. I hear, however, you are thinking of engaging Mr. Marsh, who preached last Sunday."

Mr. Everard hesitated, for he knew well that Mr. Marsh also was a *protégé* of Lady Fayne's.

"I like him personally in many respects," he said at length. "He has great fluency, like most Irishmen, but he trusts to this to enable him to preach well, and, I fear, neglects careful preparation. Last Sunday he assured me, on walking home from church, that he had never even selected his text until he entered the pulpit. I could not help replying that 'I thought so,' but I do not think he discovered the intended rebuke."

Lady Fayne looked grave.

"Really, Mr. Everard, I do not wonder you find a difficulty in getting a curate when you treat a most promising young man in this way. You apparently expect to find perfection."

"No indeed, Lady Fayne, do not misjudge me; I only hope to find imperfection trying to put off its first syllable, which is not the case with either of the characters under discussion. I try, however, to imitate my wife's charitable view of people, for when I am disposed to be critical, she



always quotes the old French proverb, "Il ne faut jamais dire qu'on n'aime pas un tel, mais qu'on ne le connaît pas."

Lady Fayne was silent ; she did not understand French, and did not wish to acknowledge her ignorance ; but she settled in her own mind that Mr. and Mrs. Everard were possessed of strange ideas on every subject, and she wished fervently that the parish was intrusted to safer guidance. Wishing to change the subject, Mr. Everard turned to Beatrix, saying he was intrusted with a message from his wife, who would be very glad if she could spend the next day at the rectory, as she would be quite alone, Mr. Everard being obliged to leave home on business.

"I shall be delighted," replied Beatrix, who looked upon a *tête-à-tête* with her "Saint Clare" as one of her greatest pleasures.

Her affection for Mrs. Everard, which was warmly returned, had been the first means of drawing her out of the hard loveless life she had been leading for the last few years, and under the sunshine of this influence her nature was beginning to expand, and to develop various good qualities which had hitherto remained dormant.

"But I thought you were going for an expedition with the Fitzgeralds in their yacht to-morrow," remarked her mother.

"So I was," replied Beatrix, "but I am sure Lady Katherine will excuse me. Why, here comes Mr. Veryan ; I will send my apologies by him."

At this moment the door opened, and Mr. Veryan was

announced. His appearance created no surprise, for he had become a frequent visitor at Faynetower, and many were the surmises on the subject throughout the neighbourhood.

"I have come to see Sir Michael," he said, half apologetically, "for my brother-in-law wishes to know if he will shoot with him the day after to-morrow. He sent me over to make all arrangements as to the hour of meeting, for he thinks of going down to Denyleagh by boat if Sir Michael will accompany him."

"I am sure he will be very glad to do so," replied Lady Fayne, "but he is out somewhere in the park, and I expect him in every moment, for I sent to tell him Mr. Everard was here."

"You are coming with us to-morrow, Miss Fayne, are you not?" he asked, looking earnestly at Beatrix. "We hope to have a long day on the lough, taking our luncheon with us and having a pic-nic on one of the islands. My sister Irene is not a good sailor, so she has begged to be left behind, but we hope to have the pleasure of your company."

"Thank you," replied Beatrix, "but I was just going to write a note to Lady Katherine, asking her to excuse me, for I am going to spend the day with Mrs. Everard, who would otherwise be quite alone."

Audley's face clouded over, and his disappointment at her decision was evident.

"No," interposed Mr. Everard, "I cannot permit such self-sacrifice on your part. My wife would be greatly

distressed to think that you should give up such a pleasant party for her sake. I shall exercise my sacerdotal authority," he continued, with a smile, "and insist on your accepting Lady Katherine's invitation."

At the word "sacerdotal" Lady Fayne looked up in surprise, and was about to make some remark, when Audley hastily said—

"That settles it, Miss Fayne; you dare not disobey your parish priest; and besides, I heard Irene say this morning that she would not feel lonely without us, for she would go and see Mrs. Everard if—"

"Pardon me, Mr. Veryan," interrupted Lady Fayne, "but I cannot allow a minister of the Church of Ireland to be called a parish priest in *my* house. Father O'Connor is the only priest I know of in this parish, one who uses all his influence to instruct the misguided people in the pernicious errors of Romanism."

Audley looked confused, and knew not what to reply to this unexpected attack, but he made a mental vow that "he would never again come within reach of this old Puritan if it were not for Beatrix."

Mr. Everard, however, came to his rescue, saying—

"Well, Lady Fayne, I am afraid I consider myself quite as much the parish priest here as Father O'Connor. You cannot deny that I am in priests' orders."

"No," replied Lady Fayne, "only"—

"I think, Mr. Veryan," said Beatrix, rising, "that if you want to see my father I had better take you to him, for William does not seem able to find him, and we will

leave my mother and Mr. Everard to their theological discussions, in which neither you nor I take great interest."

"By all means," replied Audley with alacrity, his face betraying the pleasure with which he acceded to her proposition.

"I fear I am not a theologian," he continued, bowing to Lady Fayne, "but perhaps Miss Fayne may instruct me in this science."

Mr. Everard also rose, and wished secretly to accompany them in their search for Sir Michael, but feeling instinctively that he would be *de trop*, he considerably took his leave.

Lady Fayne's strict ideas of etiquette were greatly shocked by her daughter's conduct, but she was powerless to prevent it, and therefore was obliged to acquiesce in a proceeding of which she highly disapproved.

## CHAPTER X.

Sweet were the woods through which we went together ;  
Gladly thou wentest, and one glad with thee,  
Drowned in the glow and glory of the weather,  
Kissed with the breath of summer and the sea.

F. W. MYERS.

"I FEAR I am depriving you of much profitable conversation," remarked Beatrix archly as soon as they had left the drawing-room.

"I am only too glad to escape," replied her companion, laughing, "especially under such a charming escort," he continued, looking at her with undisguised admiration.

"Well done, Mr. Veryan, you are almost Irish in your talent for making pretty speeches!" exclaimed Beatrix; "did you acquire it since you came to this country?"

"Yes," he replied, with meaning, "I had no need for them before."

"Better and better," said Beatrix, laughing; "I had no idea an Englishman had so much invention at his disposal; they generally say just what they mean, in an honest, downright way, and neither a word more nor less; but you are quite an exception."

"I wish, Miss Fayne, you could be induced to believe

what I say," said Audley, impatiently; "I am not accustomed to saying what I do not mean, and I wish you to take it seriously, and not to laugh at it as you do."

"Oh, but that is too much to expect of any Irish girl, and I certainly cannot promise to comply with your request. But really," she said, changing her tone suddenly, and looking up into his face with a softened expression, "I do not wish to hurt your feelings, so we will change the subject."

Beatrix then proposed making a short cut through the woods to the place where she expected to find her father. Her companion was obliged unwillingly to acquiesce in this arrangement, though he would have considered the longest way far too short for the pleasure of a *tête-à-tête* with her,—an opportunity he rarely enjoyed. He was afraid, however, of expressing what was uppermost in his mind, or proposing to take the longer route, fearing to call forth Beatrix's satire, as he felt painfully conscious he was no match for her powers of repartee. With other girls he could be witty and amusing, and was considered a general favourite, but in her society he felt unable to laugh and talk as lightly as with others.

His love for her was growing deeper and stronger day by day, and yet he felt pained by her conduct, for she only laughed at him when he endeavoured to express it, and told him "not to be sentimental." Other girls he felt were ready enough to welcome his advances and to meet him half-way, but Beatrix Fayne apparently disbelieved in his love for her, and refused to give him any encouragement.

To-day, however, her conduct was quite changed, and it raised new hopes in his heart.

After their first little quarrel was ended, she became as different as possible. Never before had she seemed so interested in his conversation, so eager for his approval, so ready to linger by the way, that their *tête-à-tête* might be prolonged; never before had she fixed her beautiful eyes upon his face with such a look of tenderness and regret when he mentioned his impending departure.


Neither had spoken for some time. They were crossing the wood by a narrow path, scarcely broad enough to admit of two walking abreast, and the evening sun was lighting up the autumn foliage with its glorious tints of gold and crimson, while a flood of light streamed through an opening towards the west upon the rich brown leaves of the bracken, and tangled masses of briar, which grew around in rich luxuriance.

All was hushed in the calm and stillness of an autumn evening, and only the sound of a distant sheep-bell broke the silence.

"Shall we sit down for a little while?" Audley said at length, pointing to a log of wood that had fallen across their path.

"If you wish it," said Beatrix gently; "we shall not be much longer together, as you are going to leave Ireland so soon."

A thrill of happiness passed through her companion's heart at these words, which contained the first intimation that his presence or absence was not equally a matter of



indifference to her. He longed to say something, to express in words the deep devotion and admiration he felt for her, but feared to break the spell which seemed to make her more gracious towards him, and to draw down upon himself the satirical reply he had so often experienced. So they sat on for some time in silence, apparently absorbed in their own thoughts, Audley, however, secretly upbraiding himself for his inability to find some subject of conversation which might be pleasing to her.

Beatrix had been sitting with her head resting upon her hand, slightly turned away from the earnest gaze which she felt, rather than saw, was fixed upon her. At length she stretched out her hand to gather a few blackberry leaves which grew within her reach, and blending their bright coloured tints skilfully together, she looked up into Audley's face with a sweet and winning look, and offered them to him timidly, saying, "Will you accept these from me?"

He took the leaves and kissed them, wishing at the same time that he could have kissed the beautiful hand that presented them, and replied passionately, "I will keep them for ever."

Again they were silent. At length he ventured to say—  
"Will you miss me when I go away?"

No answer came at first, but after a pause Beatrix said slowly, "I think so."

Her eyes were fixed on the ground, but her whole attitude and tone of voice expressed a readiness to yield to his wishes, which he had never dared to hope for, and



receiving courage from this, he took her hand in both of his, exclaiming eagerly—

“Miss Fayne—Beatrix,—let me ask you but one question,—if you only knew—”

“Hush!” she said, rising hastily and drawing away her hand with difficulty from his grasp; “do you not see my father is coming?”

A rustling of leaves and branches was heard, and, to Audley’s despair, Sir Michael’s figure was seen close at hand, making his way towards them through the under-wood, and saying good-humouredly, “I fear I am disturbing a pleasant conversation.”

Audley’s vexation was so great that he could hardly greet Sir Michael with due courtesy, but Beatrix’s presence of mind came to the rescue.

“Never mind, father,” she said promptly, “I, at least, am always glad to see you. We were just making our way to you through the wood, for Mr. Veryan had a message to give you from Sir Percival.”

“And so you thought you would deliver it to Beatrix first,” said Sir Michael, laughing, looking at Audley, whose evident confusion had not escaped his notice. “Never mind; you had better come back with me to the house, for I have finished my work for to-day, and you must stay for dinner.”

“I fear I cannot,” replied Audley, “as my sister will be expecting me.”

“Come along, Trix, don’t desert us,” said her father, seeing her linger behind.

“Thank you, father, but I prefer staying here to watch the sunset. Good-bye, Mr. Veryan; tell Lady Katherine I shall hope to join her party to-morrow.”

Audley unwillingly left her to follow Sir Michael, whose intrusion at such a moment he found it difficult to pardon. Had it not been for his inopportune arrival he might have persuaded Beatrix to listen to him, he might even have won her, for never before had he found her in so propitious a mood.

The thought filled him with untold happiness. To him she was the impersonation of all that was beautiful and noble in womanhood, and he loved her with the whole strength of his upright manly nature. By day or by night she was never absent from his thoughts, and the unconcerned way in which she received his advances, treating him with friendly indifference, and refusing to acknowledge his evident admiration, all made him still more eager to win her affections. This last interview, however, had raised his hopes to their highest pitch; if only they had been left undisturbed for a moment longer, she might have uttered the word which would make his whole life one dream of happiness, and then how he would love her! He would devote himself to her as no husband had ever done before, and he would obey her slightest wish. How he looked forward to introducing her to his father and mother, who, he felt sure, would be proud of such a daughter; and what a sensation she would create in the neighbourhood! He would take her to London, and there her beauty would excite universal admiration, while her

wit, her versatility, her powers of conversation and talent for society, would soon make her the reigning belle of the season.

"She will not be like most of the pretty women one meets," he said to himself as he walked homeward, "who are mere dressed-up dolls, with nothing to say for themselves; she will very soon take the shine out of them; none of them are fit to hold a candle to her. All I can say is, that I'll be one of the luckiest fellows I know if she will only have me. I don't feel too sure about that, however, for she is one thing one day and another the next, never the same for two days together. She was as nice as she could be to-day, but it is just as likely she won't speak to me to-morrow; however, I'll try my luck the next time I get the chance, for I can't go on in this way much longer—one has no peace of mind day or night."

## CHAPTER XI.

"I have a smiling face," she said,  
"I have a jest for all I meet,  
And so you call me gay," she said.

"Behind no prison-grate," she said,  
"Which mars the sunshine half-a-mile,  
Live captives so uncomforted  
As souls behind a smile.  
God's pity let us pray," she said.

E. BARRETT BROWNING.

"I WOULD rather stay here and watch the sunset."

Such had been the plea on which Beatrix declined to accompany her father and Audley Vryan on their return to the house, but as soon as they had left her and gone out of sight, the glory of the setting sun seemed to lose its interest for her. More and more beautiful became the autumn tints around her, deeper and deeper grew the crimson of the clouds, while the wood was lit up with splendour, but all passed unnoticed by her. She bent her head upon her hands, and remained lost in thought. Her favourite dog, Leo, had accompanied her, but while Audley was present he had wandered away among the bushes; now that she was alone he returned to his post beside her,

and stretched himself at her feet, looking appealingly into her face. At length she roused herself, and stroking his head with her soft hand, confided to him the troubles which human ear had never heard.

"Dear Leo," she said half aloud, "what can I do? I know he loves me: it is no mere pretence this time; and I dare not let him see that it is returned. If only he would go away and not ask me! He at least is true and honourable, and would feel deeply the pain I have vowed to inflict. He would not go away like the others and console himself a day or two after with some one else. Why did he come here to fall a victim? I must be true to myself. I dare not go back from my resolve.

"I vowed during that terrible night at Lucerne that I would never love again,—that I would live for hatred, to avenge myself and others. There are numbers of other girls who are ready enough to fall in love with men, to curtsy, and say, 'Thank you, sir,' when they are asked: well, perhaps after all they are the happiest; but my fate is different. I must not shrink from the task I have set myself. I know very well that he loved me from the first. I could not help that;—but then I drew him on. I showed that I liked him, and so I do, far better than I ever imagined I could have liked any man again."

Here she buried her face in her hands, as though to conceal even from herself the tears which involuntarily rose to her eyes.

"How foolish I am!" she said at last impatiently. "I have carried out my purpose bravely so far, and I am not

going to give in now, no matter what it costs me. I will teach men something of the pain they so often inflict, and this may make them more careful with others, from having experienced it themselves. Many a girl will have cause to thank me, though I shall be her unknown benefactor ;—and yet I love him.”

At these words she rose, as if fearing her resolution might be shaken if she pondered over the subject much longer, and walked slowly homewards.

“I wish I was like his sister Irene,” she continued ; “she seems to have lived in an atmosphere of love from her cradle, and everything has gone smoothly with her ; she was engaged as soon as she left the schoolroom, and I believe her *fiancé*, Captain Leighton, is a piece of perfection,—so she has the happiest possible life before her. How unequal things are ! If my surroundings had been like hers, I might have been very different—and yet she is not like most of those insipid English girls who have no life or ‘go’ in them, and who look shocked at every word you say. How I do enjoy astonishing them ! But she has plenty of fun in her, and yet there is something that makes one love and respect her at once. I wish she could be a friend of mine and make me more like herself. If only she were my sister !” Here her eyes filled with tears. “Well, it might have been—but I shall never have a sister. I have been lonely all my life, and I shall be lonely till the end. Ah ! well,” she continued, “I suppose life will not last for ever. I shall be thankful enough when mine is over, for the next world, whatever it is,

cannot be much worse than this. Come along, Leo, I must not stay here talking to you any longer; it is growing quite dark: we shall have such a scolding from mamma for being out so late, and you cannot take my part, though you would if you could, wouldn't you, Leo?"

Thus addressed, Leo hastened to assure his mistress that her confidence in him was not misplaced, by barking loudly and wagging his tail in apparent delight in the prospect of a walk homewards.

"Why, Beatrix," exclaimed her mother as she entered the drawing-room, "where have you been all this time? You know I have an objection to your staying out in the woods all alone at this hour. There might be poachers and all sorts of people about; besides, it does not look well to see you going about so much by yourself. You should take your maid with you if you want to go for these long rambles in all sorts of out-of-the-way places. Your father came in long ago, and you ought to have returned with him."

"I was only sitting in the wood, mamma, and I had Leo with me to defend me from all the perils you seem to dread. I was safe enough, I can assure you."

"Well, Beatrix, I hope you will remember what I have said," continued her mother sternly, "about staying out so late. You know how highly I disapprove of it, and while I think of it, let me tell you how much you astonished me just now by your conduct towards Mr. Veryan. What could he have thought of you proposing, as you did, to take a walk alone with him? You seem

to set all bounds of propriety at defiance. I am sure his sister would never have thought of doing such a thing."

"Perhaps his sister was differently brought up," replied Beatrix sarcastically, as she left the room to escape any further upbraiding.

"At least," she continued to herself, "from all I hear of Lady Veryan, she must be very different from my mother. Perhaps I should have had some chance if I had been her daughter."

And so ended a scene which was of almost daily occurrence.



## CHAPTER XII.

There ought to be more interest in humanity, and more power of throwing one's-self into the mind of everybody, so that no visit should appear dull. An infinite being comes before us with a whole eternity wrapped up in his mind and soul. We proceed to classify him, label him as we should a jar, saying, 'This is rice,' 'This is jelly,' etc., and then we think we have saved ourselves the trouble of taking off the cover, whereas, in truth, such a being never existed before. Each one has a soul as distinct in its peculiarities from all other souls as his or her face is from all other faces.

F. W. ROBERTSON.

THE following day it was arranged that Irene Veryan should spend the time with Mrs. Everard that the rest of the party were absent on their expedition in the yacht. They started early, all in good spirits, Lady Fitzgerald and her husband both looking forward to a long day on the lough, which they always enjoyed, while Audley eagerly anticipated a meeting with Beatrix. He resolved to delay no longer, as his time in Ireland was drawing to a close, and therefore, if possible, he determined to find an opportunity during their pic-nic on the island to ask her to decide his fate. Irene accompanied them to the shore, and after they had fairly started, turned her steps towards the rectory, where she looked forward to spending a pleasant day with Mrs. Everard.

She walked on with a sad and pre-occupied air, unlike her usually bright and cheerful aspect. She had received no letter from Captain Leighton for a considerable time, and as he generally wrote frequently, and had never before during their engagement allowed so long a period to elapse, she had become uneasy as to the unknown cause of his silence.

Her mind conjured up all manner of possible and impossible fears ; he might be ill, and had not liked to write for fear of alarming her ; his letters might have been lost in the post, or perhaps he had never received hers, and was waiting for her to break the silence ; or possibly—but this was a supposition she could hardly allow even to herself—he had grown tired of her, or had found some one he had cared for more, and wished to end their engagement.

“What am I saying?” she said to herself, ashamed of such suspicions ; “I am not worthy of his love if I could doubt it for a moment. I will trust him implicitly, even though I cannot understand his silence. Think how he trusted me and loved me during the long time in which father opposed our engagement !”

She had nearly reached the rectory, when a voice close beside her caused her to start.

Occupied by her own thoughts, she had not noticed a tall barefooted beggar who approached her noiselessly, and, holding out his hand, said in supplicating accents—

“May the saints defend ye, me pretty young lady, and

will ye give poor ould Mick a trifle, just to remember ye by?"

"Indeed," said Irene timidly, "I am very sorry, but I am afraid I have nothing with me."

"Well, an' sure it's not much I want, honey," replied Mick, regardless of the refusal; "it's just enough to kape me from dying of starvation, which I'll be sure enough to do if ye don't help me. Such a fine-looking young lady as ye are, too, and with such fine gentleman for your husband as the blessed saints will send ye one of these days, ye couldna but have a kind heart in your body to help a poor crater that's in distress, and doesn't know where to get a bit or a sup."

Irene quickened her steps as she approached the door of the rectory, but putting her hand into her pocket to ascertain that her purse, as she imagined, had been left at home, the beggar's hopes were raised.

"Ah! you're a sweet young crater! May fortune ever follow after ye!" but he added vindictively, on finding no coin forthcoming, "may she never come up with ye!"

At this moment, to Irene's great relief, Mr. Everard appeared, and inviting her into the house, told Mick to be off without loss of time. On Irene's remonstrance against his seeming harshness to the poor starving man, and on her request that something might be given to him, Mr. Everard replied, laughing, "I fear, Lady Irene, your tender heart is not suited to deal with some of our Irish beggars. Only a few days ago this same friend of yours appeared at Faynetower as a deaf and dumb man. His condition

excited so much pity in the minds of the servants, that they proceeded to relieve him liberally. Sir Michael, coming up at the time, had his suspicions aroused, and remarked—

“ ‘May I ask, my good man, how long you’ve been afflicted in this way, for I would like to do what I can for you?’

“ ‘Oh indeed, sir, this long time!’ was the reply.

“ ‘Then if that’s the case,’ exclaimed Sir Michael, angrily, ‘the sooner you’re cured the better,’ and, with Leo’s assistance, he obliged him to depart with all speed.”

On entering the drawing-room, Irene greeted Mrs. Everard affectionately, and recounted her adventure, saying how much relieved she felt when Mr. Everard appeared and came to her assistance.

“I am glad he was able to be of any use to you,” replied Mrs. Everard; “but I fear I am inviting you here under false pretences. You see I am not alone after all, for just as my husband was starting this morning he received a telegram saying his friend would not be able to meet him till next week, so he will have the pleasure of your company as well as myself.”

“I often wonder,” remarked Irene during the course of their conversation, “that Mr. Everard does not take a town parish, or go to some sphere where his talents would not be buried as they are in the country. Surely he would be happier within reach of some congenial society. My sister and brother-in-law are only here for half the year, and there seem so few cultivated people in this neighbourhood.”

“You forget Lady Fayne,” replied Mrs. Everard with a

smile, "but really my husband is not as destitute of intellectual society as you imagine. At first, I think he did feel it a little when he left Trinity College and settled here, but he soon became accustomed to it. He has the society of books, and correspondence with his friends, visits from them and to them; besides, he is so much absorbed in writing, when not occupied in the parish, that he never finds the time pass heavily."

"But does he not look forward to being made a Dean or a Bishop some day? My brother-in-law always says he is well fitted to be one."

"My husband is not ambitious," said Mrs. Everard; "a considerable piece of preferment was offered to him lately, and I urged him to accept it, but he replied that he wished 'to dwell among his own people,' quoting those quaint lines of George Herbert—

'How know I, if Thou didst me raise,  
That I should then raise Thee?  
Perhaps great places and Thy praise  
Do not so well agree.'"

Irene was silent, but in a few moments Mrs. Everard continued, "I must not, however, waste the time of your visit in talking of my husband, though it is the form of selfishness I find most difficult to overcome; tell me of all you have been doing lately, and how much longer we may hope to have you in the neighbourhood."

"I am afraid we must return home next week," replied Irene, "as my father and mother have come back, and will want us to entertain a large party they have asked to

Endellion for the shooting, so we must not delay any longer, much as we enjoy our stay here."

"And then there will be the preparation for your wedding, which, Lady Fitzgerald tells me, is to take place soon. Do tell me a little about Captain Leighton, of whom I have heard so much from your sister."

Irene blushed, as she always did on hearing the praises of her *fiancé*, but after she had spoken about him for some time, she suddenly checked herself, saying—

"Really, Mrs. Everard, I am quite ashamed of myself, for how can it interest you in the least to hear so much of some one you have never seen?"

"Indeed you are mistaken," replied her friend: "you do not know what pleasure it gives me to hear all about your life, and the future that lies before you both."

"But do tell me," inquired Irene, "how it is you take so much more interest in others than most people? I have never met with any one before who was not greatly bored when people talked of their own doings. I think it must be your wonderful gift of sympathy which draws all hearts towards you."

Mrs. Everard smiled.

"You must remember I am an invalid," she said, "and as I cannot leave my sofa, people are very kind in coming to see me, and allowing me to share their interests. My life would be very dull and narrow if it were not for the many lives that seem linked with mine, and in whose joys or sorrows I am permitted to share. I always feel that true sympathy includes 'rejoicing with those

that do rejoice,' as well as sympathy in sorrow and suffering."

"Yes," replied Irene; "people are ready enough 'to weep with those that weep;' but very few care to throw themselves into the lives of others as you do."

"I think I owe the power of doing so to my early training," said Mrs. Everard. "My mother took great pains with my social, as well as intellectual education, and, being an only child, she was able to bestow more care on me than mothers can generally give. She had lived a good deal in Paris in the days when the *salons* held by French ladies were of considerable political and social power. Those held by a Madame de Féranon were, however, the most popular, and her brilliant réunions were largely attended by distinguished persons of all kinds. She was neither young, beautiful, rich, nor talented; but her friends used to say that the secret of her popularity lay in one remarkable trait in her character, '*Elle savait écouter et s'occuper des autres.*'"

Irene smiled and said—

"I am not then surprised at her success, for that is one of the rarest talents."

"I fear it is," replied Mrs. Everard. "People are so much occupied with themselves that they care little enough for others; but my mother was so much impressed with the truth contained in these words, that she used generally to repeat them to me whenever I went into society."

"And you must certainly have acted upon them," remarked Irene.

"I have never regretted doing so, for this maxim has brought me many friends, who cheer my life more than I can possibly say. Shut up as I am for life within the four walls of this house, it is a never-failing source of happiness to me to watch the lives and interests of those who are able to take a more active part in life, and who allow me to help them in any little way that lies within my power."

"You have certainly a large correspondence," said Irene, glancing towards a large pile of letters on the little table beside Mrs. Everard.

"Yes," she replied, taking up several at once; "these will give you some idea of what one day's post will bring. Here is one from a poor lonely little girl, a maid-of-all-work in a lodging-house in Dublin, whose home is in our parish. The next is from a friend of mine in India, an officer's wife, to announce the birth of her first baby, and asking me to be its god-mother. Another is from a pretty little cousin of mine, to tell me of her engagement, and saying she hopes to bring her *fiancé* here next week. This is from a shopman in London, who used to be in my class before I married, asking me to accept a pretty eider-down quilt he is sending me, 'with his love and duty;' so you see, Lady Irene, I have still some links with the outer world, though you think we are buried in the country!"

"Many more links than most people, I admit," replied her guest, laughing; "and I shall never pity you any more now that I find you are the centre of such a wide circle of love; but I must be merciful and not allow you to talk any more, for you are looking quite tired already. Shall



"I ring the bell for your maid?" she added, much alarmed by seeing Mrs. Everard's head fall back on her pillow with closed eyes, while a look of pain she tried in vain to repress, flitted across her features.

The maid came at once in answer to Irene's summons, and looked much alarmed at seeing her mistress in this state. After the application of some restoratives, Mrs. Everard opened her eyes and said faintly—

"I am so sorry this should have happened during your visit, but I shall be better soon."

"It's just one of her old attacks, my lady," said the maid to Irene; "and I'm sorry enough it should have come on so soon after the last, for the pain is sometimes almost more than she can bear, and this may last long enough."

"Poor thing," said Irene, with tears in her eyes; "I am so sorry. Is there nothing I can do for her? Shall I call Mr. Everard?"

"The master's out, my lady, thank you kindly; but if I might make so bold as to say so, the best thing you can do is just to leave her to herself, and I'll do all I can for her."

Irene stooped down and kissed Mrs. Everard's pale forehead, saying gently, "Good-bye."

Mrs. Everard again opened her eyes, and, in a voice almost inaudible, murmured—

"Thank you so much for your visit."

"I will come to-morrow and see how she is," said Irene to the maid as she left the house; "and if there is

anything my sister or I can do for her, do let me know at once."

"Thank you for your kind heart, my lady," replied Mrs. Everard's maid, who had lived with her from childhood, and tended her with the faithfulness and devotion of an Irish nature; "but there's nothing none of us can do for her when she's took this way: if there was, it's myself would be the first to do it, for I'd just be willing to die for her, the angel that she is! It breaks my heart to see her suffer so."

## CHAPTER XIII.

These two they dwelt with eye on eye,  
Their hearts of old have beat in tune,  
Their meetings made December June,  
Their every parting was to die.

TENNYSON.

AS Irene walked slowly homewards she pondered deeply over Mrs. Everard's words.

They seemed to place society in a totally new light, and she would try to remember them, and carry them out in the new life before her. She knew how popular Captain Leighton was in his regiment, how he was loved both by officers and men, and how anxious he was that she should be liked by them. Lord and Lady Veryan had brought up their children to be as reserved and exclusive as they thought befitted their rank. They were taught to be courteous to their equals, and kind towards their inferiors, but always with the understanding that they must remember their position, and never allow it to be encroached upon by any familiarity, or even friendliness on the part of those with whom they associated.

"I do not like to see you so ready to make friends out of your own family, my dear Irene," Lady Veryan had one

day remarked to her daughter. "Acquaintances are all very well, but I should like you to remember that blood is thicker than water, and that your own relations ought to be sufficient for any well-brought-up girl. When I was your age I never wished for any friends but my own brothers and sisters, or perhaps one or two cousins who came to stay with us occasionally, and therefore I am surprised to see how eager you are for the society of those of whom you know so little."

Poor Irene was abashed at such a reproof coming from a mother who she loved dearly, and was obliged to forego any further attempts at forming friendships out of her own family.

After her engagement to Captain Leighton, however, she was delighted to find that he was by no means so exclusive, but encouraged her to cultivate the acquaintance of all who were worth knowing, and from whom she could learn many lessons.

"You will not be inclined to think too much of yourself, Irene," he said, laughing, "if you associate more with others; try to follow my excellent example, and learn the old Latin maxim, '*Homo sum; nihil humanum a me alienum puto*,' which I must translate for your benefit into — '*I am a man; nothing which belongs to man can be foreign to me.*'"

Irene had laughed, and promised to follow his advice, but not until after their marriage, for fear of shocking her mother's scruples. Her conversation with Mrs. Everard had recalled this scene.

"How I wish Cecil knew her," she said to herself, "he would admire her as much as I do. I will try to follow her advice, and to put myself *en rapport* with all the officers and their wives, finding out all that is good in them instead of thinking them dull and uninteresting."

She was walking quickly towards the house by a long avenue of beech-trees, which she had chosen as being less frequented than the broad carriage drive, fearing to meet again the beggar who had so much alarmed her in the morning. Great was her dismay, however, to see a tall form approaching in the distance. Her imagination immediately conjured up all manner of terrors; could it be another beggar, or the same in a different costume?


No; it was evidently a gentleman. But her brother-in-law and Audley would not return till late, and this was an unfrequented path, by which visitors to the house never came. She wished fervently that she had not walked back alone, but had asked Mr. Everard, or one of his servants, to accompany her.

The figure drew nearer and nearer with rapid steps, evidently recognising her, and before she had time to wonder any longer who it was, a well-known voice exclaimed—

"Irene."

And she was clasped in Cecil Leighton's arms. As soon as she had somewhat recovered from her joyful surprise, she asked when and how he had come there, and what had brought him so unexpectedly to Ireland.

"I came to tell you some good news, darling," he



replied. "Our regiment is not going to India after all, but will be quartered at Kingsminster for some time to come. I have also found a charming little house there which I think of taking, without loss of time, for Captain and Lady Irene Leighton."

"Perhaps I have no wish to become Lady Irene Leighton after all," she said, laughing. "How do you know I have not found some admirer in this part of the world whom I consider more attractive than Captain Leighton? But why have you not written for so long? I could not think what had become of you."

"I did not write, dear, because I hoped each day to be able to get leave and to bring you this good news in person, but now that I have come, I hope you are glad to see me?"

"Dearest," she replied softly, "you know it."

They had come to an old rustic seat placed under one of the beech-trees, upon which they seated themselves, while Cecil said—

"I was in despair when I arrived at the house and found it deserted by you all, and thought I should have to wait a whole day without seeing you, but when I heard you had gone to the rectory, I set off without delay to find you; and now I have you all to myself," he continued, placing his arm round her, and drawing her closely to him.


"Dear Cecil," she replied, looking up into his face with a loving, trustful smile, "I am so glad you have come, for I have been very lonely without you. I almost think it

seems harder to wait during these last few months before our marriage than for all the years previously ; but what good news, though, about being quartered at Kingsminster instead of going to India, and how glad my father and mother will be ! I am afraid that I hardly took it in at first, for the unexpected delight of seeing you again quite overpowered my other feeling. What a happy life we have before us, dear !" she continued ; " it sometimes seems almost too good to be true."

" Do not say so, Irene ; you know I always take hopeful views of life, and I believe in a very bright future for both of us ; at least, darling, my one aim shall be to make you happy, and we know each other so well by this time, that it will hardly be like entering upon an untried state. I think we shall be as happy as the day is long in our pretty little home, and I know you will like my colonel and his wife, Mrs. Cassilis, who is looking forward to having you much with her."

" I am sure I shall like her, Cecil, from all you have told me of her, and I mean to be as friendly and pleasant as possible to all your brother-officers and their wives, laying aside the *hauteur* of which you used to accuse me."

" That was only the fault of your training, dear, not of your own true heart ; but I can promise you a warm welcome from all my friends in the regiment ; however, you must make up your mind to associate with people of all sorts, for I can assure you they are not all paragons, nor so refined and cultivated as the society you are accustomed to at Endellion, or in Grosvenor Square. There is a Mrs.



Santley, whom I am afraid you will detest ; the wife of one of the officers, a pretentious, vulgar little woman, whose father was a city alderman, and is always showing off her riches, and making comparisons between herself and Mrs. Harrington, who has only her husband's pay to depend on."

"I am sure I shall like Mrs. Harrington," replied Irene; "I always feel so much for people in that position who are poor, and yet have to keep up appearances."

"I don't know that you will care much for her either ; she is certainly pretty and of good family, but she is a great flirt, and goes in for being 'fast,' and all that sort of thing. For my own part I cannot stand her, so I have as little to do with her as possible, and there is no love lost between us. The other night, at the garrison-ball, I overheard her saying to one of her partners, 'Nothing would induce me to dance with that stuck-up creature Captain Leighton,' so I took pretty good care not to ask her."

"I hope your feelings were not much wounded," said Irene, laughing; "but really you do not seem to depict my future companions in a very favourable light. It is well I have received a lesson from Mrs. Everard to-day upon trying to find good in every one, or I should be much alarmed at the prospect before me. Still," she added fondly, "I shall not be afraid of even the dangers of garrison society while I have my true knight, *sans peur et sans reproche*, at my side to guard me from them."

"Yes, darling, I will shield you and watch over you in every way I can, and you in return will help me as you



have ever done, in all that is noblest and highest, for what would my life have been without your influence?"

"Or rather, what would I have been but for you?" said Irene, in a low voice, and both remained silent.

"By the way," said Captain Leighton, at last breaking the silence, "I must not forget to deliver to you all manner of affectionate messages from your father's old friend, the Dean of Kingsminster, whom I saw just before I started."

"I shall be very glad to be near him," replied Irene; "there are few men I admire so much, though I really have seen but little of him. He is obliged to go abroad every winter for his health, so that when he is in England he does not consider it right to leave Kingsminster. My father has asked him again and again to Endellion, but he either cannot or will not come. But now," she added, rising, "I think we had better return home, for the others will soon be there."

## CHAPTER XIV.

What made the assembly shine ?

Robin Adair.

What made the ball so fine ?

Robin was there.

It was late when the yachting party returned from their expedition, and great was their surprise at finding Cecil Leighton at Oriel Court. They welcomed him warmly, as they already loved him as a brother, and looked forward to having him as one of their number in the various expeditions Lady Katherine had planned to fill up the few days which remained to Audley and Irene of their visit to Ireland.

All, excepting Audley, had been much pleased by the success of their day on the lough. The sun had shone brilliantly, the wind was favourable, the fishing excellent ; and all seemed to combine to render the day as propitious as possible. To Audley, however, these circumstances were of little moment. The sun might shine, but the day was clouded for him by the conduct of Beatrice.

She seemed almost to ignore his presence, never speaking to him unless absolutely necessary, and while on board

the yacht, she appeared so absorbed in fishing as to look upon all conversation as an unnecessary interruption.


After landing on the island and partaking of the luncheon they had brought with them, Audley hoped the tide would turn in his favour, for his sister took out her drawing materials and began to sketch, while Sir Percival stretched himself on the ground near her and lit his cigar.

"There are some ruins not far from here," remarked Lady Katherine to her brother; "if you would like to explore them and to wander over the island, we shall not be ready to start for another hour, so I advise you to make the most of your time."

"Certainly," replied Audley, and, turning to Beatrix, he added, "will you do me the honour of acting as my cicerone, Miss Fayne? You know the island well, and you will be able to instruct my ignorant mind in all the history or legends connected with the ruins."

"I never heard there was any attached to them," replied Beatrix, "but very likely your imagination will supply what is wanted. I mean to stay here and receive a lesson in sketching from Lady Katherine."

"But, my dear Beatrix, you never draw, so you had much better accompany my brother," remarked Lady Katherine, who was by no means a strict chaperone. "You will find it very stupid sitting here with Percy and me; he will go to sleep, I feel certain, and I shall be so absorbed in my lights and shades, that I shall be a very uninteresting companion."



“Yes, do come, Miss Fayne,” eagerly urged Audley ;  
“we shall be back in no time.”

“Thank you, I think I told you I preferred remaining here,” said Beatrix, decisively, and he was obliged to depart discomfited.

“I never saw such a girl,” he remarked to himself ;  
“she is never the same for two days together. She was as nice as could be to me the other day, and I felt I was getting on ; but I knew it would not last, and now I am as far off as ever.”

“I never saw any one who knew better how to keep fellows at a distance than Beatrix Fayne,” remarked Sir Percival to his wife the first time they were alone together. “Did you notice to-day how she would have nothing to do with Audley ? I think he is pretty far gone about her, though she certainly gives him no encouragement. It must be quite a new experience for him.”

“Yes,” replied Lady Katherine, laughing, “he is not generally received so coolly by young ladies in England ; but I wonder how it will all end, for I feel sure he is deeply in love with her, though I am not in his confidence, like Irene. I cannot make out whether Beatrix cares for him or not. Sometimes I think so, and then at their next meeting she is as different as possible.”

Some weeks before, the party at Oriel Court had received an invitation to a ball given by Mr. and Mrs. Temple, friends of the Fitzgeralds, on the coming of age of their eldest son. It was to take place two days before

the date fixed for the departure of Irene and her brother, and consequently the invitation had been accepted by the whole party. Irene, who had wished to decline, though not allowed to do so by her sister, now looked forward with much pleasure to the prospect of dancing the whole evening with Cecil Leighton. Audley also determined that this evening would at last decide his fate, for he would no longer allow Beatrix to evade him as she had done the day of the pic-nic. A ball-room, he thought, presented unrivalled opportunities for a *tête-à-tête*, and for asking the question he would no longer postpone.

Some uncertainty prevailed, however, as to whether Beatrix would be present, and the subject was known to be one of family discussion at Faynetower.

Lady Fayne strongly disapproved of balls, and rarely allowed her daughter to attend them, though Beatrix was passionately fond of dancing. Sir Michael, on the other hand, enjoyed them greatly. His sociable nature was never so happy as in seeing his friends, and in hearing all the news of the county. He also delighted in the admiration Beatrix excited on the rare occasions on which she was allowed to attend a ball ; but he feared his wife too much to grant his daughter's request that he would allow her to go with him to all such entertainments.

The invitation to Templemore had been promptly declined by Lady Fayne on behalf of herself and her daughter, notwithstanding the earnest entreaties of Beatrix ; but Mrs. Temple would take no refusal, and had kindly driven over a distance of twelve miles to beg that Miss

Fayne might be allowed to accompany her father. And so the matter was settled, much to Beatrix's delight, for she looked forward with mingled feelings to meeting Audley Veryan once more before his departure.

On the night of the ball all at Oriel Court were ready in good time, for they had a long drive before them. Lady Katherine looked the picture of a handsome young matron, arrayed in black velvet, magnificent diamonds, and a crimson rose in her hair.

Irene was dressed in soft white tulle, trimmed with white satin, and a beautiful necklace of pearls, her mother's gift, while a spray of maidenhair fern and pink geranium placed in her hair, and another on her shoulder, relieved the dazzling whiteness of her dress.

"My darling, you look lovely," said Cecil Leighton to her in a whisper as they stood apart in the large hall waiting for the carriage, and he wrapped a soft white shawl round her.

An answering glance of love was Irene's only reply, but presently she said in a low voice—

"I am so glad, dear, you are here to go with us ; it makes all the difference in the world to me ; and we shall have such delightful dances together."

He was about to reply, when Sir Percival came up, saying, with a smile—

"The carriage is round, if you are ready for it ; you will have plenty of time for confidences when you reach Templemore, so I fear I must disturb a pleasant  *tête-à-tête* , which can be resumed later."

On reaching the house they found the ball had begun, and the room was already well filled.

"May I have the pleasure of this waltz, Irene?" asked Cecil, and receiving a smiling assent, they were soon gliding round the room with a graceful movement which created much admiration.

"That fellow knows how to dance," exclaimed young Mr. Temple, the hero of the evening, to his partner. "I wish I knew how he did it, for I've spent ever so much on dancing lessons lately, and I don't seem quite able to manage it yet."

"Practice makes perfect," appropriately remarked his pretty little partner, who had suffered so much during the earlier part of the dance, that she suggested sitting out the remainder. "Very likely you will be able to dance as well as he does after a little."

"Well, I don't know that I think so much of him after all," replied the eldest son, who felt somewhat hurt that any one else should take a low estimate of his powers of dancing; "he looks as if he couldn't do much else."

"Oh, I think you are mistaken, Mr. Temple," she replied. "I have a cousin in Captain Leighton's regiment who tells me he can do everything well. He is a capital shot, and a first-rate rider. He hunts a great deal, and they are so fond of him, that George says whenever they get into a scrape they go at once to Captain Leighton to help them out of it."

## CHAPTER XV.

To see her is to love her,  
And love but her for ever ;  
For nature made her what she is,  
And ne'er made sic anither !

BURNS.

WHEN Beatrix Fayne knew that her mother's permission was given, and that she might go to the ball, her first feelings were those of happiness. On reflection, however, many thoughts crossed her mind which she tried in vain to shun.

She knew Audley Veryan would be there. She felt he would renew the subject begun in the wood when her father had, much to her relief, broken in upon their conversation. She had successfully avoided him the day of the pic-nic, but she knew this would be impossible in a ball-room.

And what could she say to him ? How earnestly she wished she had never seen Mr. Chamberlain, never made that rash vow to avenge her own wrongs and those of others,—a vow in keeping which she had anticipated so much pleasure, and which had only brought her pain ;—yes, in the present instance, intense pain. She no longer



disguised from herself the fact that she loved Audley, loved him with the strong affection of which her nature was capable. She felt he understood her, that he would bear with her, that he would love her tenderly and truly if she accepted him. She saw a bright vision of happiness opening before her. No more would she have to endure the uncongenial society of her mother; she would escape from a life of constant opposition and thwarting of her wishes, into a home of her own, where she would reign supreme, loved and admired to her heart's content.

"And must I forfeit all this," she said to herself, "for the sake of a foolish promise I made years ago, in a moment of wounded affection?" She hardly trusted herself to hear the answer her own heart gave, but determined to wait until the choice was actually before her. Something might happen to decide it one way or another,—and it did.

Her dress consisted of black net, on which she had fastened small festoons of variegated blackberry leaves gathered by herself from the wood; the golden and crimson tints looked well on their dark back-ground. Round her head she placed a coronet of the same leaves, which harmonised well with her dark hair. Round her neck was a broad band of plain gold, and on her beautifully-shaped arms she wore massive gold bracelets. Her appearance was even more striking than usual, and as she entered the room, accompanied by her father, every one turned to look at her.

"I have to thank you, Mrs. Temple," she said gracefully

as she greeted her hostess, "for the pleasure of being here to-night. It was very kind of you to intercede with mamma for me."

"Our party would have lost one of its brightest ornaments if you had stayed away, Beatrix," replied Mrs. Temple admiringly as she looked at the beautiful figure before her.

Audley Veryan, who was standing near, heartily agreed to the remark, for he was watching her closely, and was disposed to augur well from the happy look on her face.

"May I have the honour of this dance, Miss Fayne?" he said, approaching her; "I have been looking out for you ever since we came."

"With pleasure," she replied, taking his arm; "I have been looking forward greatly to this ball, and I hope to enjoy it as much as I anticipate."

"I wish we were not going to leave Ireland so soon," remarked Audley; "it has been the happiest time of my life so far."

"And of mine," replied Beatrix, softly, in an almost inaudible voice; but Audley heard it, and his heart beat with a new hope and joy.

They joined at once in the waltz that was going on. Suddenly the music ceased.

"That went splendidly!" exclaimed Audley; "you must give me the next dance, Miss Fayne."

"It was delightful!" answered Beatrix. "Well, I suppose I must give you the next, as I am not engaged for it."

"But you soon will be," said a voice behind her, "if you will only give me a chance. Three of my friends want to be introduced to you already," and, looking round, Beatrix discovered her old admirer, Captain Lane, standing close beside her.

"Come along, Miss Fayne," said Audley, "and let us find a seat in the conservatory; it will be cooler there."

On their way they met Captain Leighton, with Irene on his arm, coming towards them.

"May I introduce Captain Leighton to you, Miss Fayne?" said Irene. "You have so often heard of him that I am glad you will have the opportunity of knowing each other."

Much to her surprise Cecil Leighton started and looked at Beatrix with astonishment, while the latter grew very pale.

"I think we have met before," he said at last, recovering himself.

"Yes," replied Beatrix very slowly, "at Lucerne." And then she added with an effort, "How is your friend, Mr. Chamberlain?"

"I have not seen Mr. Chamberlain since that night," replied Cecil calmly, "neither do I wish to do so," and he and Irene passed on.

"But who is Mr. Chamberlain? and where have you met Miss Fayne? and why did you not tell me before that you knew her?" asked Irene, with pardonable curiosity.

"I had heard you mention the Faynes as living in this neighbourhood, but it never occurred to me that they might be the same as some people of that name I once met at Lucerne when I spent a night there. An acquaintance of mine had been flirting desperately with Miss Fayne, though he was engaged to some one else. I saw what was going on and gave her a hint, which obliged him to tell her the truth. She never knew my name, for we only met at breakfast the next morning, but I never can forget her face of misery. Chamberlain left the same day, and so did I, but by different routes, and I have never seen him since."

"What a wretch!" said Irene; "poor Beatrix! how much that explains of her character, which I could never before understand, and of the bitterness with which she speaks of men in general!"

Many were the discussions throughout the ball-room as to the claims of the two rival beauties to be considered the belle of the evening.

"Lady Irene looks like a white dove," remarked one old lady, "with her white tulle dress floating round her, her fair hair, and that sweet, gentle expression on her face that always makes her so attractive. I do not wonder at Captain Leighton falling in love with her while she was still a child in the schoolroom, as Lady Katherine tells me was the case."

"For my part," replied a dowager who sat near her, "I admire Beatrix Fayne far more; there is something almost Eastern in her beauty, quite unlike the ordinary

type you meet with, and her dress to-night suits her to perfection."

"So Mr. Veryan seems to think," continued the first speaker; "he never takes his eyes off her, though they have not danced together as much as I imagined they would. I hear he has almost lived at Faynetower since he has been in Ireland, and doubtless he finds the society of Beatrix very attractive."

"I wish," remarked Mrs. Temple, who had joined the group, "that Beatrix would marry him, for I think she is far from happy at home. You have no idea of the difficulties Lady Fayne made with regard to her coming here to-night. I have no patience with her."

It was quite true that, to the surprise of every one, Audley and Beatrix danced but little together during the evening. Unfortunately for him, the unexpected meeting with Captain Leighton, whom she had never seen since the memorable night at Lucerne, recalled all the painful feelings she had striven to overcome. All the misery of that night rose up before her, and surged over her heart with a wave of bitterness. She felt utterly reckless, and cared but little what she did or said. She had come to the ball almost with the intention of breaking her stern vow, and, if Audley asked her, of showing that she was not indifferent to him, even if she did not accept him; but such softer feelings were now banished from her heart. How could she tell that he was not like other men? He appeared to care for her now, but would it last? He would grow tired of her, and, finding she did not suit him, would

fall in love with some one else. She would not risk her happiness or expose herself to such a danger. She would be free, and mistress of her own fate, not intrusting it to another, who would probably soon cease to care for her.

"Who is Mr. Chamberlain?" asked Audley after their brief conversation with Captain Leighton.

"A friend of Captain Leighton's," she answered coldly, in a tone which forbade any further questions. Almost at the same time she had been surrounded with various admirers, all eager to claim a dance, and proceeded to fill up her card, quite regardless of Audley's entreaties that she would reserve some for him.

She entered to all appearance with eagerness into the pleasure of the evening, never sitting out a single dance, talking and laughing gaily with her partners, who, as they expressed it afterwards, "had never seen Miss Fayne in better form."

Towards the end of the evening, Audley, with difficulty, persuaded her to give him another dance, after which they disappeared for a time from public view.

"Where is Miss Fayne?" asked Captain Lane; "this is our dance, and I cannot find her anywhere."

"Here she is," exclaimed a merry voice behind him, and turning round, he saw Beatrix, with Audley Vervan standing near her.

"I am quite ready," she added, "for Mr. Vervan has nothing to say worth listening to, so I shall be glad of a little variety."

"That's right, Miss Fayne, stick to old friends, they're better than new ones," exclaimed Captain Lane triumphantly, as he carried Beatrix off for the dance, which was just beginning.

"I advise you to find a partner, Mr. Veryan," said Beatrix lightly, turning towards Audley as she left him; but the only answer she received was a look of intense pain and bitterness, which haunted her for years after.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Had we never loved so kindly,  
Had we never loved so blindly,  
Never met, and never parted,  
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

BURNS.

DURING the long drive home from the ball at Templemore, Audley had never once spoken.

Irene noticed his silence, but did not remark upon it, thinking she divined the cause.

The rest of the party, who had thoroughly enjoyed themselves, kept up an animated discussion over the events of the evening.

On reaching Oriel Court, he followed Irene into the hall, saying in a low voice—

“May I come to your room?”

“By all means, dear,” she replied, leading the way to her bed-room, where her maid was awaiting her. “Why, North,” she exclaimed, on seeing the latter, “I thought you were in bed long ago! Did I not tell you not to sit up for me, but to try and cure your headache by going to sleep as early as you could?”

“Thank you, my Lady,” replied North. “I know



you did, but I thought you might want me, so I stayed up."

"Go to bed directly," said Irene, laughing, "and obey my orders better another time."

As the maid left the room Audley entered it, and sank down wearily on a sofa.

"I'm done for, Irene," he said. "She won't have me."

"My poor boy, how sorry I am!" replied Irene tenderly, going up to him and throwing both her arms round his neck; and then there was a silence, which neither broke for some time.

Irene well knew the uselessness of words at such a time, and wisely refrained from offering consolation; but her heart grieved for the brother she loved so dearly, and she longed to comfort him.

"Is there no hope?" she said softly after a pause; "why not try again?"

"No use," replied her brother, "she's not the sort of girl to change her mind. I wish I could have told her how I cared for her; but she wouldn't give me time, and besides, I can never say half what I feel to her."

"Dear Audley," was all Irene could say, as she drew his face down to hers and kissed it.

This seemed to convey a ray of comfort; but they sat together for some time longer without speaking.

"Well," he said at length, rousing himself; "it's all over now, and I must make up my mind to it;" but he bent down and covered his face with his hands, as though unwilling that even his sister should see his suffering.

"There's just one thing I'm glad of," he continued after a little, "which is, that you're going to be happy, Irene. We shall be 'married and single' after all, like those old games of cricket at Endellion. I know I can never care for any other girl, and I know well enough that Beatrix Fayne will never have me, so I shall never marry."

"I almost wish I was going to remain single too," said Irene sorrowfully. "I cannot bear to think of you left all alone at home without me, dear. Shall I ask Cecil to let me put off our wedding for the present?"

"Nonsense, Irene; what are you talking of? I am not going to stay at Endellion without you. I made up my mind, as we were driving home to-night, that I'd go out to the Rocky Mountains with Lestrangle, who is going to shoot there, and is always wanting me to accompany him."

Irene's heart sank as she thought of her father and mother left without any of their children, and she knew how alarmed they would be at the prospect of Audley leaving home for an indefinite time, but she saw her brother was not to be reasoned with, and at such a time she was only too glad he should have any project to occupy his thoughts, and to divert them from the disappointment from which he was suffering.

"Good-night, Irene," he said, rising, "I must not keep you up any longer. I shall miss you when you are married."

He stooped to kiss her, and she saw the tears standing in his eyes.

"My dear, dear boy," she said, "I would do anything

in this world to comfort you ;” and as he left the room the words of a poem she had lately read rose to her mind :—

“ And is this like love to stand,  
With no help in my hand,  
When strong as death I fain would watch above thee ?  
God be with thee, my beloved, God be with thee !”

“ Yes,” she said half aloud, “ that is the only comfort,” and kneeling down she committed her brother to the care of One “ to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid.”

As Beatrix went to her room that night she felt she had recklessly cast away the crowning happiness of a woman’s life, the gift of a true man’s love. She stood for a few moments in front of a tall pier glass in her room, and surveyed herself critically in it.

“ Yes,” she said slowly, “ I am beautiful. I do not wonder that men admire me, and like to dance with me, and compliment me on every occasion ; and yet,” she added passionately, “ the plainest girl in the room to-night was happier than I. What good has my beauty been to me ? It has only made me miserable, and others too. I love him with my whole heart, and yet I refused him. I hate myself for it. How miserable he looked, and it was all my fault. How could I have done it ?” She sank into a chair in an agony of grief and remorse, and covering her face with her hands, cried as if her heart would break.

## CHAPTER XVII.

It flooded the crimson twilight  
Like the close of an angel's psalm,  
And it lay on my fevered spirit  
With a touch of infinite calm.

It linked all perplexed meanings  
Into one perfect peace,  
And trembled away into silence  
As if it were loth to cease.

A. PROCTER.

A COLD bleak day in March, the high east wind was whirling clouds of dust through the London streets. Every one was hurrying along as quickly as possible to escape from the discomfort they experienced in such weather. Two figures, warmly clad and closely muffled, were coming out of a large shop in the West End.

"Shall I call a cab, my Lady?" asked the one who appeared to be a maid.

"No, I think we can walk, North," replied Irene Veryan; "we have finished everything, except seeing about my dress at Madame Delphine's, and that is in the next street. After that is done we will drive to Grosvenor Square, and rest until it is time to start for the station."

Irene's wedding was to take place shortly, and there were still many final preparations to be made. Lady Veryan thought she was not strong enough to attempt the journey to London in such cold weather. Lady Katherine was still in Ireland, and could only come to Endellion with her husband the day before the wedding, bringing little Dorothy, who was to be one of the bridesmaids, and so most of the arrangements devolved upon the bride-elect, who had come to London with her maid.

Irene was happy in the near approach of her wedding, and eagerly looked forward to being united to one whom she had loved and admired from childhood, and to whom she felt able to intrust her future happiness with implicit faith. And yet her feelings were not wholly unalloyed ; she felt deeply parting from the father and mother to whom she was tenderly attached, knowing that they would have none left to brighten their home, now that Katherine was married, and Audley absent.

The thought of her brother always filled her mind with sorrowful thoughts. Soon after their return from Ireland he had left home as he proposed, and started for Colorado with his friend Colonel Lestrangle ; but they had heard little of him since his departure, as he and his companion were now far out of reach of posts and telegrams, and other appliances of civilised life.

One letter only had reached them, speaking of his encampment in a log-hut, in a remote part of the Rocky Mountains, far from any human habitation. He said the sport was excellent. Bears were plentiful, and he gave a

long description of his encounter with a huge "grizzly" which had taken place the day on which he wrote. He hoped to be able to send this letter by the first person who was passing that way going to Denver, though he could not tell when their letters might reach him.

Never since the night of the ball at Templemore, had the subject on which they had then spoken been referred to between Audley and his sister, but he felt that she understood him, and he accepted all her tender little offices of affection as expressions of mute sympathy. Deeply though she would miss him, and much though she longed he might be present at her wedding, she put her own wishes aside, and did all she could to further his plans for going to America, inducing her father and mother to give their consent, though at first they were unwilling to do so.

On the day of which we speak Irene had been thinking much of her brother. The near approach of her wedding made her wish he could have been with her, and she felt she would have looked forward to it still more had he been there to assist in the arrangements, to entertain the guests, and to support her through it. Perhaps the weather and the dreariness of the scene had something to do with the depression she could not shake off, but everything around seemed to accord with her feeling of sadness.

A poor woman, scantily clad in a thin shawl, hurried past her, with traces of want and care on her sorrowful face. A little child with bare feet was being dragged along the street by a drunken mother. It stumbled and hurt itself severely, but instead of receiving a maternal

caress, it was rudely shaken, and told to "hold up," while the woman pulled it on faster than before.

A group of boys and girls were watching a Punch and Judy show with evident delight, becoming so absorbed in the entertainment as to forget the bitter wind and piercing cold from which their ragged garments barely protected them. Irene stood for a moment to watch their happy faces, but a policeman soon came up and told the showman to "move on," upon which the little crowd dispersed with evident disappointment.

"Let us come in here for a moment," said Irene, as they passed the half-open door of a church.

They went in and sat down to rest. All around spoke of peace and beauty, quiet and calm,—the grand proportions of the building, the exquisite carving, the calm faces of Saints which looked upon her from the painted windows, the softened light which streamed through the coloured glass, all seemed to soothe and strengthen her mind and heart. The rich notes of the organ were being softly played as they entered, and Irene recognised Mendelssohn's beautiful air, "O rest in the Lord," which was an especial favourite with her. She listened with rapt attention as the sound floated through the building, and seemed, without words, to convey to her a message of comfort and hope. She waited until it was ended, and, after kneeling for a few moments in prayer, rose, and left the church, her heart filled with the peace which passeth understanding.

On coming out into the noisy street once more, she noticed a little scene which seemed to harmonise with her

present frame of mind. At a corner of the street stood a flower-girl with a basket of primroses and violets. A lady was buying several bunches, and, noticing the wistful look of a little, pale-faced child standing near, presented her with two of those she held in her hand.

"Thank you, ma'am," said the child, "I'll take them to mother, she's ill."

"Poor child," said Irene, "take this to her too," and she placed a coin in the little hand as she passed by.

A little further on she noticed a barrel-organ playing a well-known and lively air, to which some working-men who were passing by paused to listen, and seemed to enjoy the music.

"After all," said Irene to herself, as they reached Madame Delphine's door, "there is a bright side to everything, even to London streets on a dusty March day."



## CHAPTER XVIII.

L'égantine son bouton perce,  
Descuevrant ses blanches couleurs,  
La terre vesti sa robe perse,  
Et son playsant mantel de fleurs ;  
Emmy les champs, et la saulsaye  
Emmy buissons et boiz ramez  
A jargonner l'oisel essaye  
Et semble dire, "Aimez, aimez."

*Chanson du Roi Richard.*

GREAT were the preparations at Endellion on the eve of the approaching marriage. It was a bright spring day, and all seemed to promise well for fine weather on the morrow. All signs of winter were rapidly disappearing. The trees and hedge-rows were already clothed in young green foliage, while the birds were singing everywhere, and all seemed to speak of love and youth and happiness. The church was occupied by a body of fair decorators, who vied with each other in making the building as beautiful as possible with wreaths and festoons of flowers for the coming ceremony. School children were exploring the woods far and near throughout the surrounding neighbourhood to find primroses, violets, and wood anemones, to scatter before the bride whom they all loved. The

villagers were busy erecting triumphal arches, with "Happiness to the bride and bridegroom," decorating their houses with flags, bright-coloured calico, and various devices, to do honour to one who had lived among them from childhood, and whose acts of personal kindness and sympathy had endeared her to all.

"Ay, but we shall miss her," remarked one old man who was superintending the erection of an arch near the Castle gate, and whose advice did not meet with the attention he expected from those engaged in the work.

"She's been a kind friend to me, she has; and when my Lucy, who's gone now, lay ill for those eight weeks, Lady Irene would come and see her a'most every day, and bring her nice bits of things from her own dinner, and Lucy would say when she was gone, she was just glad to be ill to have her young lady come to read to her and sing to her as she did."

While such preparations were going on in the village, those at the Castle were not idle. Some of the guests had already arrived, and the remainder were expected that evening.

Every room would be occupied, for a large party, all relatives, had been invited for the wedding breakfast, while the following evening there would be a tenants' dinner, and dance afterwards.

Entertainments were also provided for the old people and school children, and every one at Endellion was looking forward to the wedding-day as the greatest event in their lives.

Lady Katherine Fitzgerald had been married in London, much to the disappointment of the villagers; but Irene had declared nothing would induce her to be married anywhere but at Endellion, in the old church, which had associations for her which no other building could possess.

"I do think it queer," remarked Mrs. Page, the house-keeper, "that Mr. Audley should not have returned for his sister's wedding, and he so fond of her, as he always seems to be. I made sure he'd have come back from those wild parts before now, and not left his father and mother so lonely-like without none of their children to say a word to them. What's the good of his going out there to shoot hares and rabbits? Can't he get enough of them creatures at home?"

"Hares and rabbits out in the Rocky Mountains!" exclaimed Mr. Harding, the butler, aghast. "But surely you are aware, Mrs. Page," he continued, with a condescending air, "that they go out to them outlandish places, not to shoot hares and rabbits, but in pursuit of what is called 'big game'—bears, buffaloes, and other animals of that sort."

"Bears or hares—it's all one to me, I'm sure, Mr. Harding," replied Mrs. Page with an offended air. "I only hope he won't be bringing none of them nasty beasts back with him for *me* to cook. Her Ladyship did say something to me the other day about American meat, and that they were using it now in the best houses. 'Very well, my Lady,' I said, 'and so they may, but I'd be sorry to see it brought into *my* kitchen as long as I am Lady

Veryan's housekeeper.' I know what's becoming to my station, and I hope I may keep to it; and I'm happy to say her Ladyship has said nothing about it since."

While this important conversation was going on down stairs, Lady Veryan was resting on the sofa in her boudoir, while Irene was seated on a low stool beside her. For the last time she had been fulfilling her duties as Irene Veryan. She had seen the head gardener, and given directions that the flowers for the dinner-table should be arranged to her satisfaction. She had been with Mrs. Page into each visitor's room, to ascertain that all was in readiness for them. She had received the guests who arrived by an afternoon train, and had sent them off for a walk with her brother-in-law. She had opened the latest detachment of wedding presents, and arranged them with others in the second drawing-room, where the tables were covered with beautiful presents of every description—magnificent gifts of plate, some presented by Captain Leighton's brother officers, and others by Lord Veryan's tenantry; travelling-bags, beautifully fitted up with every appliance of comfort; dressing-cases, ormolu candlesticks, scent-bottles, paper-knives, etc., were scattered in rich profusion, and produced a dazzling effect upon the beholder.

Irene, when last she looked at them, had paused for a moment to survey her treasures, and then went to the corner of a table, where lay a small parcel carefully enveloped in silver paper. She opened it, and looked earnestly at its contents, while tears filled her eyes.

"Poor little Mabel," she said to herself, "how I wish she

could have known how I valued it, and how I will prize it above all my other presents."

The present consisted of a little sachet of pale blue satin, with "Irene" embroidered upon it in silver letters, and had been the last piece of work of the village doctor's dying child, to whom Irene's visits had been the one ray of brightness in her short and suffering life.

She had allowed no one to touch this work but herself, and almost feared she would not live to finish it; but while Irene was in Ireland, she worked at it each day, and just as it was ended, passed away, without being able to present it to the friend she so dearly loved and admired.

Had she seen how it was valued, she would have thought her toil well repaid.

But Irene's labours were ended at last, and she had come to her mother's room for a little quiet talk before the hour of five o'clock tea made it necessary for them to join their guests down-stairs.

"Dearest mother," she said, taking Lady Veryan's hand in both of hers, and kissing it tenderly, "I wish I was not going to leave you to-morrow. I should be miserable if it was for any one but Cecil; but I have such utter trust and confidence in him, that I believe I shall be perfectly happy; and you know how I will try to make him a good wife."

"Yes, dear child," replied her mother, "I feel secure as to your happiness with one we have known and loved so long and so well; but home will be very different without you, and your father and I will miss you more than we like to think."

"Mother, darling," exclaimed Irene, with tears in her eyes, "you must come and see me often in our pretty little house at Kingsminster, and whenever Cecil gets leave, we will come to you, so we shall not be much separated after all. It is not as if I was going all the way to Ireland, like Katherine, but I shall be close at hand, and if you want me, you will send for me at once, will you not?"

"Yes, dear," said Lady Veryan; "but you know I am not very strong, and I shall often feel nervous about myself when I have neither you nor Audley at home to cheer me."

"A telegram for Lord Veryan, my lady," said a footman who entered the room with a yellow envelope lying on a salver, "and I think he is out, for Harding saw him go out an hour ago, and says he is not come in."

"Will you open it, Irene?" said Lady Veryan, "it's most likely from Harcourt, to say he has missed his train, as he generally does."

Irene took the telegram, and the servant left the room.

It was growing dark, and she went to the window to read it.

"What is it, Irene?" asked her mother; "nothing wrong, I hope?"

A low cry was heard. Irene let the telegram fall on the ground, and sank upon a chair, her face covered with her hands.

Lady Veryan rose hastily from her sofa, and, taking up the telegram read the following words:—

"Colonel Cassillis to Lord Veryan.—A railway accident

happened just as we were starting for Endellion. Leighton seriously injured, and cannot live many hours. He asks for Lady Irene Veryan."

"Irene, my darling child!" exclaimed her mother, "can this be true? Surely there must be some mistake. He cannot mean Cecil."

Irene rose, went to her mother, and read the message again, almost mechanically, as though unable to take in the full meaning of the words. At the same moment Lord Veryan entered the room.

"I must go to him at once," she said, with unnatural calmness. "Father, take me to him."

## CHAPTER XIX.

Only we ask, through shadows of the valley  
Stay of Thy staff and guiding of Thy rod ;  
Only when rulers of the darkness rally  
Be Thou beside us, very near, O God !  
F. W. MYERS.

“WE humbly commit the soul of this Thy servant, our dear brother, into Thy hands, as into the hands of a faithful Creator and most merciful Saviour.”

Irene and her father had arrived at Kingsminster, and were standing outside the half-open door of the room in which Cecil Leighton lay dying, when these words reached them from within.

Irene entered the room softly, and knelt down in a corner behind the bed, where she could remain unobserved. The words so full of comfort and hope seemed to strengthen her for the dread moment she felt was rapidly approaching, in which she must part from him who was dearest to her on earth.

The benediction followed, and then a solemn stillness, broken at last by a voice so faint as to be almost inaudible.

“Good-bye, Forrest ; and say good-bye for me to my men, and tell them not to forget me.”



"There's no fear of that, Leighton," replied the chaplain in a broken voice; "I saw some of them as I came here, and they all sent you their love and duty. God bless you for what you have been to them and to us all!"

"Has she come?"

"I think so," said the chaplain, who then left the room.  
"Thank God!"

At these words Irene advanced quietly from her hiding-place, and, going to the bedside, said, with a great effort of self-control, as she stooped to kiss him, "My darling, I have come to nurse you."

The sight of the white, suffering face before her, whose look told her that death was fast approaching, overcame her completely, and kneeling beside him, she hid her face in an agony of grief.

"Dearest," he replied, while a look of tenderest love lit up his pale features, "how good of you to come! I longed to see you once more, but feared you would not be here in time; it will be easier to go now."

She raised his head and laid it upon her breast, while her arms encircled him, but she could not speak for fear of again giving way, and losing the self-command which she felt it needful to maintain during the brief moments that might remain to them.

He lay still for some time as though gathering strength for what he wished to say, then with an effort said—

"Irene, it is hard to leave you; life has been very precious since I knew you, and we would have been so happy together. My dearest, I fear your life will be very

lonely, but God will comfort you. Think of my motto, 'With God, and for others.' "

Before she could reply he sank back in her arms as though the effort of speaking had been too great for his strength, and lay for a short time with his eyes closed.

"My darling!" was all Irene could trust herself to say, for she felt as if her heart was breaking.

And so the night wore on. Cecil lay as if unconscious, though still breathing, and she watched earnestly for his eyes to open and to recognise her once more. At length a sudden change came over his face, but no look of pain crossed it; his eyes opened and rested on her face. One long kiss—one lingering look of love, as she bent over him—he closed his eyes, and all was over.

A faint streak of rose-coloured light glowed in the eastern sky, a soft breath of morning air was wafted through the half-open window, while on the sill outside a thrush poured forth the first notes of its morning song.

All seemed to herald the approach of a brighter dawn, of a joyful release. After the long night, the break of day, and after death—life.

And so dawned what would have been their wedding-day.

## CHAPTER XX.

Dead love ! dead friendship !  
Ah ! what bitter dreams  
Do haunt their rest !  
Glad memories to sadness turned, fair words  
To stings, and trust confiding into doubt  
Of human truth.

M. E. T.

WE will now turn to Audley Vryan, and see how he had been occupied since the night on which he had been refused by Beatrix Fayne.

He had then, as we know, announced his intention of going immediately to the Rocky Mountains with a friend who was shortly to leave England with the same intention. On their return to Endellion, Irene at first endeavoured to dissuade him from his project, knowing how much his parents would feel his absence, but all to no purpose.

The monotony of the home life with which he had before been well contented, now seemed intolerable to him. Day and night the thought of Beatrix was uppermost in his mind, and the knowledge that his attachment was hopeless as it was deep, caused him to become restless and dissatisfied, unable to take any interest in the ordinary pursuits which had hitherto afforded him suffi-

cient occupation and amusement. His parents saw the change, but were ignorant of the cause, which was known only to Irene. Lady Vervan at last decided, after many consultations with her family doctor, that Audley "had done too much" (as she always had prophesied he would), and was now out of health in consequence of over-exertion at cricket and the other manly sports of which she strongly disapproved.

"I knew the reaction would come sooner or later, my dear Audley," she remarked in almost a tone of triumph. "You may remember how I warned you last summer, but you only laughed at me, and now you see the consequence. Yes, I fear we must consent to your going away for a change of air for a time, in hopes that you may return stronger."

"Thank you, mother," replied Audley, laughing, "but I am happy to say I feel as strong as possible, only one wants a little change now and then."

It was, however, mental rather than physical change that he needed, for the treatment he had received from Beatrix had wounded him deeply. The fact that she did not love him, that she cared for another, the bare mention of whose name had affected her so deeply, was to him no matter of surprise. He was not conceited enough to imagine that every girl he liked must fall in love with him and accept him if he asked her, but what he keenly felt was the unfair treatment he had received at her hands. She had led him on; she had clearly shown that she liked him, and by a thousand unmistakable signs had allowed

him to perceive that his love was returned. She had been changeable certainly, but through all her various phases he could easily see that his society gave her pleasure, and that she was by no means indifferent to his admiration. All this he had seen clearly, and it drew him deeper and deeper into the snare. Then, when he had declared his love, the one passionate devotion of his whole life, she had laughed at it, treated it lightly and scornfully, and then thrown it aside—as not worth having. How could he ever again believe in woman's truth or goodness? All were doubtless like Beatrice, as deep, as designing, the only difference was that few had the talent to conceal their real character as she had done. There was Irene, certainly; she was a better specimen, but she was an exception, and he felt sure there were no other girls the least like her. He would be wiser in future, he would not let himself be fooled again by any one, and bitterly did he regret having ever placed himself in her power.

He tried to forget her, but in vain. Her image was constantly before him,—her looks, her manner, her ways, all returned to his mind with a vividness he would have given anything to obliterate; while every now and then a yearning to see her again, to hear her voice once more, would overcome every other feeling, and he knew he loved her more deeply than ever.

It was to free himself from the bondage of such thoughts that he determined to start for a winter in the Rocky Mountains with his friend Colonel Lestrangle.

Both were equally fond of sport, and both looked forward to the new scenes they were about to enter.

At first the complete change, the society of his friend, the exciting nature of the sport, and the various adventures he met with, served to turn Audley's thoughts from the channel in which they had dwelt so long. He thoroughly enjoyed the wild freedom of the woods, the picturesque scenery, the stillness and solitude of the vast uninhabited tracts of country through which he roamed, the freedom from all petty restrictions and customary conventionalities of civilised life suited his present frame of mind, and he spent long days exploring by himself the great forests or wide plains which lay around him.

When the winter approached, however, with more than usual severity, his rambles were restricted to an occasional expedition after a bear, whose footprints might be seen in the morning in the deep snow lying around their log-hut, or to fetch the necessary pine logs from the neighbouring forest. For days together the blinding snow would be driven pitilessly against their windows, obliterating all tracks, and making it absolutely unsafe to stir out of doors. The only society within reach was that of an American named Jack Flynn, formerly a miner, who had given up that occupation for the more lucrative one of killing bears, lynx, and beaver, and selling their skins to the traders who came each spring to collect them.

Jack Flynn was possessed of all a miner's vices and none of his virtues. He would drink and swear and cheat; and whenever he went down to the town to sell his

goods, would indulge in a "free fight" at most of the drinking saloons in the place.

At a considerable distance further on, and nearer the town, lived a still more formidable character, whose name was unknown to any of the inhabitants of that region, and who went by the name of "The Cave Bear," on account of his inhabiting a large dismal cave which commanded the entrance to the valley.

Various stories were in circulation with regard to this strange being. Some said he was an English gentleman of good family, who had been obliged to leave his country and take refuge in this wild and remote district to escape the arm of justice.

Others said he was the son of Indian parents, who had been taken from home by traders, and brought up in one of the towns, until, when some injury was inflicted upon him, his Indian nature had asserted itself: he had killed the offender, and, breaking free from the trammels of civilisation, had taken up his position in a cave in the mountains.

There he frequently levied black-mail upon the passers-by, robbing them of their goods if he chanced to want them for himself, and pointing a loaded pistol at those who endeavoured to defend themselves. Several supplies from the neighbouring town which were on their way to Audley had been stopped in this way, while a packet of letters which had accumulated for some time at the post-office never reached their destination, but were used by the "Cave Bear" to light his fires or pipe, according to his need.

The short winter days and long dark nights, shut up in the house with no one to speak to but Colonel Lestrangle, proved before long very wearisome to Audley. He had always considered his friend one of the pleasantest and most amusing of men, when he had met him out shooting in the hunting-field, or staying in the house with a large party. Colonel Lestrangle had always something to say, some amusing story to tell *à propos* of every subject that was mentioned, and never seemed at a loss for conversation.

After some weeks spent alone with him, however, Audley began to find a falling-off in his friend's conversational powers. The old stories would recur again and again. The well-known *bon mots* would be repeated mercilessly, each time affording to their author the same pleasure as at first, until Audley began to regret having chosen a wit as the companion of his solitude. Colonel Lestrangle in return considered Audley one of the dullest young men he had ever met with.

"Veryan has hardly a word to say for himself," he complained in a letter to England. "If it was any one else, I should say he was in love, only I never saw him say more than he could help to any girl he knew, though I must say he received enough encouragement. Now that the winter has set in and we are shut up a good deal, he sits for days together looking into the fire, or takes his gun and walks off moodily by himself whenever the weather clears up a little.

"I shan't be sorry when the spring comes, and I can get

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off. All I know is, I shall not be such a fool again as to ask him to come on another expedition."

Neither were therefore sorry to part, when the long winter drew to a close and the bright spring days began to appear. Colonel Lestrangle returned to England laden with bear-skins, buffalo-horns, stuffed birds, and other trophies of his winter's sport.

Audley, on the other hand, preferred remaining longer in America. The image of Beatrix was constantly before him, and he dreaded returning to Endellion, where, without the companionship of his sister, he knew the old life would become even more monotonous than before. Accordingly he decided to spend the summer in California, visiting San Francisco and the Yosemite Valley. But all in vain; he wandered restlessly from place to place, caring little for all he saw, unable to conquer the feeling of hopeless love which he still felt for one who, he knew, would never be his. He wrote home occasionally, but never received any reply, as he moved rapidly from place to place, and his plans were too uncertain to allow of giving any permanent address.

## CHAPTER XXI.

An uncouth cell  
Where brooding darkness spreads her jealous wings.  
MILTON.

WINTER was again setting in, and Audley thought of going back to his old quarters, and settling there until he could make up his mind to return to England. It would be lonely enough; but one advantage would be, that he could think about Beatrix without any one to interrupt his train of thought by uncongenial remarks. It was late in December before he reached the entrance to the mountain pass in which he intended to take up his winter habitation.

"I wonder how the 'Cave Bear' is getting on," he said to himself as he approached the dwelling of that celebrated character; "he'd better let me alone, for I have a revolver here that will settle him pretty soon if he attempts to interfere with me."

As he drew nearer, great was his surprise to see the figure of a man smaller and shorter than the dreaded occupant of the cave coming out of the entrance, tottering under a miscellaneous weight of skins, horns, old fire-arms,

etc., which he proceeded to deposit in a heap under a tree, and, after looking furtively round, return to the cave evidently in pursuit of fresh booty.

Audley dismounted from his horse, and, tying it to a tree, followed the man who had so audaciously entered a place which had long been the terror of the surrounding country. At the door he met his old acquaintance, Jack Flynn, returning with fresh spoil, which he dropped in alarm at the sight of an intruder; but on recognising Audley, he resumed his accustomed air and tone of bravado, seeming much relieved that no more formidable rival had come to contest the possession of his newly-acquired gains.

"Hallo!" cried Audley, "what are you doing there, taking another man's property during his absence? I suppose you call that honesty?"

"Well," replied Flynn, "I guess I've as much right to it as any chap living, seeing the most of it's my own, or would have been, if that there old rascal had not stopped it before it came my way."

"But where is the 'old rascal' now?" asked Audley. "You would not dare to touch a thing in his cave if you knew he was within a hundred miles of you."

"I should like to know where *you've* been if you've not heard the news?" replied Flynn. "Why, a few days ago he was down at Denver, drinking as much as you please at a bar. He got into some fine row or other, and if he wasn't just going for to kill the man he quarrelled with; but the fellow was too sharp for him, and out comes his

pistol before we could look round, and there lay our friend the Cave Bear as dead as a door nail ; and a good riddance, I guess."

"And so you came up here to lay hands on all you could ?" remarked Audley with a look of contempt.

"I believe you," said the other. "By good luck I happened to be in the bar at the time, so, without saying nothing to no one, I thought I'd just nip off here without losing no time, and see what was to be seen. It's lucky that you came along and no one else, for you're not the sort that wants anything of anybody ; but it might not have been so well for every one, 'specially if they wished to interrupt me," and taking out a loaded pistol, he looked at it significantly.

"I don't want anything of yours ; but if I did, I know who could be a match for you," replied Audley proudly, as he handled his revolver carelessly ; "but I mean to have a look inside before I go on," and he entered the cave.

"It's not much you'll find now," said Flynn cunningly ; "and it's as well for you that you didn't come earlier, for I wouldn't have stood no nonsense," he added in a low voice, glancing furtively at a bag of gold he had hastily concealed.

Audley entered the cavern. It was true but little remained of the possessions of its former owner. All that could be carried away had been seized and conveyed to a place of hiding by the rapacious Flynn, who hoped to make his fortune by being first in the field on such a rare

opportunity of despoiling the habitation of the mountain robber.

It was a dark gloomy place; the walls were hung with a miscellaneous collection of antlers of deer, beaver, and lynx skins, Indian bows and arrows, wampum belts, moccasins, and old horse-shoes. In one corner lay a pile of old fire-arms too cumbrous to be of much use, while in another might be seen a heap of brushwood and pine logs, with odds and ends of paper for lighting the fire.

The thought suddenly struck Audley that he might possibly come across some of his missing letters of the previous winter, when rumours had reached him that they had been intercepted, with various other articles. He searched diligently for some time in hopes of finding traces of handwriting that was known to him, but in vain. He only met with pieces of newspaper, an envelope directed to Colonel Lestrangle, and an account of some goods made out to "Mr. John Flynn." He was turning away from his hopeless search when, in a recess above his head, he discovered various small articles which had belonged to the late owner—a small purse, the contents of which had disappeared, a handsomely-carved meerschaum-pipe, and a bundle of cigars wrapped in an old letter. On examining the letter closely, Audley discovered, to his great surprise, that it was a part of one written to him by Irene, giving an account of Cecil Leighton's death, and her consequent grief and loneliness.

It ended with an earnest entreaty to him to return

home, saying she felt his presence would be the only thing that could comfort her. Even in the midst of her great sorrow she did not forget him, but told him how much more fully she could now enter into his feelings. She also added that in the last letter from her sister Katherine, she had mentioned the serious illness of Sir Michael Fayne, and the devoted way in which his daughter was nursing him.

Audley read and re-read the letter which had come into his possession so strangely. He was thunderstruck at the intelligence it contained. He felt deeply for his sister's sorrow, and much regret at the death of his oldest and dearest friend.

"Poor Irene!" he exclaimed half aloud; "why, this is dated April, and to think that it is now November, and I never knew of it before! I would have gone to her at once, and tried all I could to comfort her, not that I could be of any use; she and poor Cecil were so much to each other that I know she will never be the same again. She's not the girl to get over it, and take up with another fellow directly. And then there's Beatrix in trouble too! I wish,—but there's no use in thinking of that.

"Well, I'll start for England without loss of time, and see what I can do for Irene. I ought to have been there long ago, instead of roaming about California as I did last summer."

He folded up the letter, and placed it safely in his pocket. It was growing dark, and he felt it was time to make his way on to the log-hut before night set in, where

he expected to find a store of provisions he had ordered to be sent up from Denver.

Though the cave afforded shelter, all the necessities of life had been taken by Jack Flynn, and Audley knew that at any moment a snowstorm might come on which would oblige him to stay where he was, cut off from all supplies.

He groped his way to the opening of the cave, and immediately proceeded to the large pine-trees at a little distance, where he expected to find his horse, which he had left tied to the stem. Great was his dismay at finding it gone, stolen doubtless by Flynn, who had decamped with it and all he could lay hands upon, finding it probably of great assistance in carrying off his booty to a hiding-place known only to himself. What was to be done? To turn back to the cave and spend the night there seemed the easiest course to adopt, especially as Flynn might possibly return there the next morning to secure further trophies, and if he did so, Audley had some chance of recovering his lost horse. On the other hand, it might be safer to push on and gain his log-hut in case of a fall of snow, which appeared imminent.

Accordingly he set out on his long and lonely journey, though well knowing its perils. Bears were prowling about, wolves were heard in the distance, the path itself lay along the edge of a precipice, and in several parts the footing was most unsafe even by daylight.

Still he determined to persevere, feeling secure in the possession of a good revolver, which he felt would defend him against most of the dangers that might befall him.

He had nearly finished his journey in safety, when he heard a low whine coming from a wood close at hand. He stopped to listen, and the sound was again repeated. It sounded like the moan of some suffering animal, and more like a dog than anything else.

Although it was now quite dark, Audley turned aside towards the place from whence the sound proceeded, and, with some difficulty, found his way through a tangled mass of brushwood, until he discovered the object of his search. There, stretched on the ground before him, with its foot caught in a trap, lay a magnificent collie well known to all the inhabitants of that neighbourhood as the property of the "Cave Bear." Its master had called it "Desperado," and well did it become its name, for many were the wonderful feats recorded by the inhabitants of the valley of "Desper's" doings during encounters with Indians, bears, or wolves, in which he proved of invaluable assistance to his owner. Many tales were in circulation concerning the fierce, bloodthirsty nature of this dog, but Audley had always considered them exaggerated, and traced them to an innate love of the marvellous in those who recounted them.

Poor Desperado presented a pitiable spectacle as he lay ignominiously caught in the trap, suffering acutely from the wound, and exposed at any moment to a descent of the wolves, whose short angry bark might from time to time be heard in the distance.

Audley approached him, and was touched by the piteous way in which the poor dog looked up into his face and



then down on his imprisoned foot, as though begging for release. He stooped down and unfastened the trap, while Desperado sprang upon him with loud expressions of gratitude, barking and licking his face by turns. Audley left the wood and regained the track, anxious to continue his journey without further delay, but on looking round he saw Desperado limping painfully after him at a considerable distance on three legs, unable to put the other to the ground.

He returned, and on examining him carefully found the foot so badly wounded as to render it impossible for him to follow his deliverer even for a short distance.

"Poor old fellow," said Audley, kindly patting him on the head, "I can't leave you here to be a prey to those wolves, which will be down upon you in no time. You're a good weight certainly, but I daresay I shall survive it, for there's nothing to be done for it but to carry you home and doctor you there. Luckily it's not far."

Accordingly he took the great collie up in his arms and carried him safely on to his cabin, where he found all made ready for him by the Chinese servant he had engaged at Denver, whom he had sent on to prepare for his coming.

His intention of spending the winter in his old quarters was now completely changed by the fragment of Irene's letter which he had fortunately rescued. He read it again and again, and determined to return home as soon as possible.

In a few days Desperado's foot was cured, and

Audley turned him out, feeling he could be trusted to look after his own interests. The dog, however, refused to leave his benefactor, following him down to Denver, watching for him at the hotel door, and growling fiercely if any one approached him. He bit all who tried to lay hold on him, and would allow no one but Audley to touch him. He accompanied his new master everywhere, even to the railway station, and endeavoured to spring into the car after Audley had taken his seat.

Some years after, Audley was riding in London, when the crowd through which he was passing obliged him to pause for a few moments. Suddenly a large dog sprang upon him, barking and bounding in front of his horse with evident expressions of delight and recognition.

"Upon my word, I believe it's Desperado," exclaimed Audley to a friend who was riding with him, and his opinion was confirmed by a voice from the crowd calling "Desper, Desper," to which the dog paid no attention. Audley soon discovered his former acquaintance, Jack Flynn, who had come to England accompanied by Desperado.

Audley immediately proposed to buy the dog, but Flynn at first refused to consent, wishing probably to drive a hard bargain. At last, however, he named a large sum, which Audley paid, and Desperado spent the remainder of his days in the possession of his former benefactor.

## CHAPTER XXII.

Tender his words, and eloquently wise,  
Mild the pure fervour of his watchful eyes ;  
Meek with serenity of constant prayer,  
The luminous forehead, high and broad and bare ;  
The thin mouth, though not passionless, yet still,  
With a sweet calm that speaks an angel's will ;  
Resolving service to his God's behest,  
And ever musing how to serve Him best.

THE LADY OF LA GARAYE.

THE deanery at Kingsminster was an old Elizabethan building situated not far from the Cathedral. But few rooms were inhabited, as the Dean's health obliged him to spend each winter abroad, and when at home the only ones he occupied on the ground floor were the dining-room and the library.

The walls of the latter were of panelled oak, on which were hung valuable pictures by the old masters, brought from Italy by the Dean, brass sconces and old mirrors with richly carved frames, while in recesses in the room were placed several pieces of statuary, evidently executed by a master hand. One end of the library was fitted with book-shelves, containing rare editions of valuable works collected by their present possessor, while a small beauti-

fully inlaid cabinet enclosed a unique collection of missals and other illuminated MSS. ; all betokened the refined taste and cultivated mind of the owner.

At a writing-table in the centre of the room sat the Very Reverend Edmund Hamilton, Dean of Kingsminster. A tall spare frame, a well-shaped head, with broad intellectual forehead, hair prematurely grey, deep penetrating eyes, and an expression of great firmness, mingled with gentleness, characterised his appearance.

A letter lay before him, which he was reading with deep interest—

“MY DEAR HAMILTON,—I think you know of the sorrow which has befallen us. Six months ago, while you were at Rome, Cecil Leighton, who was engaged to my daughter Irene, died from the effects of a railway accident on the very eve of their wedding-day.

“My poor child was with him at the last, and bore up in a way that surprised me. As you may imagine, the shock to her has been very great, for she was devotedly attached to him. At first she seemed wonderfully calm, and able to go about her daily duties much as usual, never giving way or allowing herself to be pitied by others. I fear, however, the strain was too great, for she now looks so utterly sad and hopeless, that it makes my heart ache to see her; and her mother and I are very anxious on her account. She cannot yet bear to speak of him, though we think it would be some relief to her if she could do so.

“The other day, however, we were speaking of you, and

wishing you could have been induced to pay us a visit, when, to our surprise, she said—

“‘I wish he would come here; he knew Cecil, and I think he would help me to bear it.’

“We have also another great cause for anxiety just now, having heard nothing of our son Audley for about six months. Irene had a letter from him on the eve of what would have been their wedding-day, but no tidings have reached us since then. The friend with whom he went to America has returned home, and tells us Audley intended to pass the summer in some out-of-the-way part of California, so it is possible he may be out of reach of postal communications; but we cannot help feeling anxious on his account, especially as we do not know where to write to him.

“Now, do not refuse me this time, but leave the Canons of Kingsminster to settle their own affairs without your assistance, and I will guarantee that no errors in precept or practice shall creep into their orthodox circle during your absence.—Your affectionate friend,       VERYAN.”

The Dean read the letter thoughtfully, he sighed deeply, and then leant his head upon his hands for a few moments, apparently lost in deep thought.

“Poor child!” he said at last; “I will go to her, but I know only too well how little comfort I can bring to such a sorrow.”

He then rose and went across the room to the fireplace, over which hung a picture, with a crimson velvet curtain concealing it from view. He drew the curtain

gently aside, and gazed long and earnestly at the picture. It was the portrait of a beautiful young girl of eighteen, dressed in white, with a crimson rose in her hair.

"Constance," he said half aloud, "it is thirty years ago, but I think it is as fresh in my mind as ever. You do not forget me, and I never forget you. If I only might help this poor child a little, I could be thankful to have gone through so many years of suffering." A look of happiness and peace crossed his pale thin features, and, drawing the curtain again over the picture, he returned to the table and wrote a letter to Lord Veryan, saying he would accept his invitation for the following week. Sympathy with others and a profound knowledge of character were qualities possessed by the Dean in an unusual degree, for though endowed with them by nature, his knowledge of the world and wide experience of humanity had enabled him to cultivate such talents to their fullest extent.

During his winters abroad, which brought him into contact with wealthy and cultivated persons of every rank, he was universally known as "the apostle of the rich;" and many a sufferer had been soothed by his visits of consolation, while many an otherwise lonely deathbed had been cheered by his presence. But not to the sick and suffering alone did he restrict his ministrations. He mingled in all innocent scenes of brightness and enjoyment, feeling that the happy and prosperous might need him as much, or more, than the sad and sorrowful, knowing that "the time of our wealth" is more perilous to the soul than "the

time of tribulation." To the young especially he directed his attention, feeling a deep sympathy for them in the temptations, difficulties, and perplexities to which they are exposed on first entering that most dangerous and untried region—The World. Both young men and girls were drawn towards him by his polished manners, dignified bearing, and graceful courtesy, while the ready interest he took in all their pursuits caused him to be looked upon as a friend to whom they would turn in any difficulty. In consequence of this, he became the recipient of many confidences, a power which he used for the highest ends, ever leading those who came to him onward and upward to lean not on himself, but on a never-failing Guide.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

Give sorrow words : the grief that does not speak  
Whispers the o'er-fraught heart and bids it break.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE Dean of Kingsminster had already spent several days at Endellion before having any private conversation with Irene Veryan on the subject which lay nearest to her heart. He watched her closely, however, studying her character unobserved, and noticing, with his usual penetration, several points in which he hoped to be useful to her whenever she asked his help. He did not wish to intrude upon her confidence, but he determined at last to seek a *tête-à-tête*, in which, if she desired, she might speak to him of the sorrow which he knew was weighing her down.

At last an opportunity presented itself.

One morning during his stay a letter had been received from Audley, after six months of silence. Evidently he had received no letter from home for a considerable time, nor had he heard any tidings of her loss, as it was addressed to "The Lady Irene Leighton," and contained affectionate inquiries for her and her husband, asking all particulars



concerning their life at Kingsminster. He wrote from San Francisco, but spoke of returning to Colorado for the winter, to his old quarters, and perhaps coming back to England in the spring.

Any tidings of Audley were eagerly welcomed at Endellion, especially the hope he expressed of returning home, where his absence was deeply felt, but this letter was one full of pain to poor Irene, awakening, as it did, feelings of sorrowful regret, which she in vain tried to still, for the life which might have been hers.

The Dean, noticing her sorrowful expression, invited her to join him that afternoon in an expedition on the river, on which he enjoyed rowing quietly and watching the leaves falling into the water one by one, or gliding slowly down the stream. Irene accepted the invitation with evident pleasure. Her father had gone to visit some farms on a distant part of his property, while her mother was resting in her room, so that she felt free to spend the remainder of the day as she liked.

They entered the boat, and Irene seated herself at the stern, holding lightly the rudder-lines, while the Dean took the oars, and in a few moments they were rowing gently upon the broad river, admiring the kingfishers as they dipped in and out in the distance, or gathering from time to time the bulrushes and flags that grew on the river's edge.

After a time they passed under the branches of a wide-spreading horse-chestnut tree, whose yellow leaves were dropping slowly into the water.

"Shall we rest here for a little while?" asked the Dean, who had rowed a good way without stopping.

"By all means," replied Irene; "I am afraid you are tired. I really ought to have thought of it before, but," she added sorrowfully, "my thoughts were elsewhere."

"I do not wonder," said the Dean, gently looking at her with pitying eyes.

"You knew him?" said Irene, with an effort. "Do tell me something of him; you do not know how I long even to hear his name."

"My poor child," replied the Dean, "I can well understand that, for, you know, his regiment only came to Kingsminster in the autumn, just before I had to leave for Italy, but I saw enough of him to make me wish for further acquaintance on my return. I hear on all sides how much he is missed both by the officers and men, and only a few days ago I was visiting a poor woman in a back street, the mother of one of his soldiers, who told me that her son never ceased to regret Captain Leighton, who had been the one good influence of his life."

"And if they miss him," replied Irene, as her tears flowed fast, "it is a far greater loss to me, who loved him with my whole heart. His love seems completely to have gone out of my life, and left it one long dreary blank."

"But why do you speak of his love as a past thing? Do you not know that he is living and loving you still, only far more perfectly, far more fully than when he was on earth? Try to accustom yourself to speak of him naturally, as though he was only gone into a far country

where you will join him before very long ; grief is so much harder to bear when we separate our loved ones from us by never mentioning them, instead of showing our simple and strong faith in the belief that they have only entered another mansion in our Father's house."

"Yes," said Irene thoughtfully, "I wish I could feel that more fully, and also that I could carry out his motto, 'With God, and for others.' Those were almost the last words he said, as if to teach me where to look for comfort in the lonely life before me. Yes, I will really try to live for God, and not think of anything else."

"Do you remember," asked the Dean, "what Frederick Robertson wrote to a young lady who told him the same ? 'You speak of living for God as if it were dying to all that is bright and cheering. You speak as one would of going into a parish union, which is good only when there is nothing else to be done. No, be *voude* if you will, but let it be *au blanc*, not *au noir*.'"

Irene smiled sadly.

"But it is so hard to be cheerful when one's heart is aching. Life seems interminable, it stretches out before me in long days and months and years, on and on, with nothing to hope for and nothing to fear."

"The days and months and years you speak of may never come, Irene," replied the Dean calmly ; "you may die first. Try to accustom yourself to take short views of life ; it is far the happiest way. I know life must seem dreary enough to you, my poor child, but God is very merciful, and His love will support and comfort you."

"I think He will," said Irene gently, "though at present I cannot understand the meaning of such a word as comfort. No one can enter into the depth of my sorrow ; even you, who speak so kindly, and wish to help me, cannot possibly know my feelings. 'He jests at scars who never felt a wound.'"

The Dean's face clouded over, and a look of deep sadness passed over his thoughtful features. He paused for a moment, as though making an effort to command his voice, and then said—

"And do you think I have never felt a wound?"

"Forgive me," replied Irene hastily, "I only thought you could little tell what I felt, as you have probably never experienced it."

"I think I have fully experienced it, Irene," he replied gravely, "though but few persons now alive know my history. I will, however, tell it to you, that you may know how deeply I feel for you, and how earnestly I desire to help you.

"At the age of eighteen, just as I entered college, I saw for the first time a beautiful young girl, two years younger than myself. I loved her with all a young man's passionate admiration, for she was my first love,—and the only love of a long life," he added tenderly. "For years I worshipped her silently, reading hard, winning honours, only that I might lay them at her feet, and become less unworthy of her love. At last I had gained a position which enabled me to ask her. I was accepted, and we had a blissful engagement of one year. My whole heart seemed

centred upon her, and my affection was returned in a way I had never ventured to hope for. We were both looking forward to the happy life before us, and to being married on her return from spending the winter in Italy with her father. One day I heard she was ill of fever at Naples, and wished to see me, though the attack was slight, and they hoped for her speedy recovery. I started at once, but in those days the diligence was the only conveyance. You can imagine the length of that journey, when every moment seemed a year, and with no tidings to be had *en route*.

"I only reached Naples to hear she had died two days before, and had been buried the morning of my arrival. So you see, Irene," he said quietly, "I have 'felt a wound.'"

"Forgive me,—forgive me for my thoughtless speech," exclaimed Irene; "I never thought you had suffered so deeply; it was even harder to bear than mine, for you did not see her again, and this has always been such a comfort to me."

"'Sufferings are learnings,'" replied the Dean gently, "to use the beautiful old Greek motto, and I have often been thankful for all I have gone through, as it teaches me to appreciate the feelings and sorrows of others. But we will not talk any more of this to-day, dear child, it is growing late, and we must be rowing homewards."

## CHAPTER XXIV.

And yet, dear heart, remembering thee,  
Am I not richer than of old ?  
Safe in thy immortality  
What change can reach the wealth I hold ?  
What chance can mar the pearl and gold  
Thy love hath left in trust with me ?  
I cannot feel that thou art far,  
Since near at need the angels are,  
And when the sunset gates unbar,  
Shall I not see thee waiting stand ?

WHITTIER.

LATE one evening in December, Lord Veryan and Irene were returning home from their afternoon's ride. They had stayed out later than usual, having made a detour on purpose to speak to the gamekeeper, on a distant part of the property, about some pheasants lately given to Lord Veryan by a friend.

As they entered the gate at Endellion they were surprised to see a gentleman walking before them towards the house with rapid strides.

"Who can it be, Irene?" asked her father; "we are not expecting any one that I know of."

"No," replied Irene; "what can he want?"

"You had better ride on," said her father, "for I want to speak to old Nicolls at the lodge about his firewood."

I will join you directly ; but it is so cold and late, I do not like to keep you waiting about with me any longer."

Irene rode on, but as she approached the stranger he turned round and looked at her earnestly, and laid his hand upon her horse's bridle. She was about to free herself, and urge her horse to a canter, when one word—"Irene,"—uttered in a well-known voice, caused her to start and tremble.

"Audley!" she exclaimed in surprise, and in a moment she had thrown herself from her horse into his arms, and the brother and sister clasped each other in one long embrace.

"The girl's mad!" exclaimed Lord Vervan, as he watched the scene at the distance, "or else poor Cecil's come to life again, one or the other; but I must see what is going on," and he trotted up quickly. "Irene, my dear Irene," he cried in an expostulating tone, as neither seemed at first to notice his presence, "what are you doing? You are forgetting yourself strangely."

"Why, father," asked Audley, "don't you recognise me? No wonder you thought Irene's conduct the height of impropriety," he added, laughing, on seeing his father's bewildered expression.

"Audley, my dear boy! can this be you?" said Lord Vervan, hardly believing his eyes; "where in the world did you come from, and why did you not let us know of your return?"

"I only reached England this morning, father, and I thought I would come on at once and take you by surprise.

I hope you are all flourishing, for it is ages since I heard anything of you."

"Or rather, since we heard of you," replied Irene; "but do not let us stay out here any longer, come in and see mother."

Great was Lady Vervan's surprise and delight on seeing her son again, after so long an absence, and her joy was shared by all in and around the castle, with whom Audley was a special favourite. He watched Irene anxiously, showing his sympathy in her great sorrow by constant little acts of affection, though never speaking to her of the one on whom he well knew her thoughts were centred.

Since his return Irene seemed happier than she had ever been since Cecil's death, and her parents saw, with feelings of pleasure, that she was gradually recovering her former brightness in the society of her favourite brother.

Some days after his return he invited her to ride with him, a proposal to which she cordially assented.

"Now, Audley," she said, soon after they had started, "I want you to tell me all about your travels and adventures from beginning to end, for you have hardly told me anything of them since your return."

"I did not know whether you would care to hear of them," he replied.

"Certainly I should, for it is new life to me to have you back again; I have felt happier since your return than I have ever been since Cecil left me, and I mean now to devote myself exclusively to you."

"Irene," replied her brother, "I never can understand



how you can talk of him so calmly, quite as if he were still alive."

"But he is, I firmly believe," answered Irene; "we are only parted for a little while, and I try to live my life bravely, and wait for our meeting again, just as I would have done had he gone to India, or to some distant place without me. I try to think and speak of him as naturally as possible, and this makes it far easier to bear, though he is never absent from my thoughts."

"But was it not awfully hard at first?" asked her brother; "you don't know how I felt for you when I heard of it."

Irene's eyes filled with tears.

"It was," she replied; "and sometimes I think it is almost as hard now, for the loneliness of life without him is so great, but I think it will become easier as time goes on; one learns to bear it more patiently and bravely, and to take more interest in the lives of others, who perhaps are even more to be pitied than one's-self."

"I don't know about that," said Audley; "I think your sorrow was about as great as any one could have, for, I can tell you, there are few fellows like Cecil in the world."

"I am sure of that," answered Irene sadly, "but I have lately met with many whose lives are far sadder than my own."

"Why, where have you been," asked her brother, "to come across so many miserable people? I am sure most of our people here are happy enough; my father does all he possibly can for them."

"Those 'miserable people,' as you call them," replied Irene, smiling, "are not natives of Endellion, but some new importations I have settled in a house in the village under Mrs. Martin's care."

"Do you mean your old governess?"

"Yes, and I will tell you of my little plan, for it is one which has helped me more than anything except your return. Some time ago, just after we were engaged, mother and Cecil and I were at the Academy one afternoon during the season. I felt so happy, and everything wore a rose-coloured aspect, for, since father had given his consent, I felt all my troubles were ended, and that the course of true love would at last run smoothly. We were going round the pictures, many of which represented our own feelings, and agreeing that never before had we seen such a good Academy. We had been looking at a picture of 'The Old, Old Story'—a village girl and her lover,—and wondering if their romance would end as happily as ours, when suddenly Cecil exclaimed, 'What a contrast!' and, turning to another not far off, I saw a picture which has remained in my memory ever since."

"What was the subject?" asked Audley, as Irene paused.

"It was called 'Hardly Earned.' It represented a poor young governess who had returned to her lonely lodging to find no welcome after her hard day's work, no fire in the grate, and only a cold and comfortless room, with a broken chair, on which she lays down her roll of music, too exhausted even to take off her wet things, while she

sinks to sleep on another, cold and hungry and tired. I never forgot that picture, it contrasted so painfully with the happiness and sunshine and wealth of love with which my life was surrounded, that I made a vow to do all that lay in my power for any of that class with whom I might meet."

"But how do you find them out?" asked her brother.

"Through a friend of mine in London who is interested in such cases. I persuaded father to let me have for my own that pretty little house in the village called Oak Lodge. We fitted it up, and established Mrs. Martin there, and from time to time my friend sends down ladies she meets with, who have a hard struggle for existence. I take them in for a short time for rest or change of air, and try to send them back to their work cheered and strengthened for the hard battle of life. I think it makes them happier to feel they have a friend who cares for them and will always be ready to help them."

"Irene, you're a brick!" exclaimed her brother admiringly. "I cannot tell you how glad I am to see you are not 'pining away in the sweet spring-time' like a heroine in a novel, who cannot get just what she wants. But don't let us waste our time any longer riding along these hard roads, we will go on to the Camberleigh Downs and have a regular good gallop before we go home. I hate these well-beaten English high-roads after the splendid plains I've been accustomed to lately, where one can ride for miles and miles on grass without seeing a track of any kind. Now, are you ready?"

And off they set, urging their horses to full speed, on and on over the short crisp springing grass with which the Down was covered.

It was growing dark as they turned their faces homewards, but Irene felt that with her brother's escort her parents would not be alarmed on her account. They had nearly reached the village of Endellion, when Audley, who had been silent for some time, remarked abruptly—

"Have you heard from Katherine lately?"

"Yes," replied his sister, "only a few days ago. You know she and Dorothy are coming to stay with us this spring before we go to London. Percival will not be able to come over this year, as he is making some improvements at Oriel Court, which require his personal superintendence."

"Did she give any news?"

Irene divined his meaning, and replied—

"Sir Michael was still very ill, in a hopeless state, and Beatrix was nursing him night and day, for he would not have any one else with him. I am afraid it will be quite too much for her. You know he had a paralytic stroke, brought on, they think, by anxiety about his money matters, which I believe are considerably involved. It is a most distressing form of illness, for he cannot speak intelligibly, though he understands perfectly all that is said to him. He has taken such an antipathy to Lady Fayne, that he will not allow her to come into his room."

"There never was much love lost between them,"

replied Audley; "but this makes it all the harder for poor Beatrix."

They rode on in silence for some time, each absorbed in their own thoughts. At last Irene said—

"Why do you not try again, Audley?"

"No good," he replied. "She's not the girl that would care for a fellow to go in for it again, when she's once refused him. She would despise me for it; besides, she cares for some one else."

"Does she?" asked his sister. "How do you know?"

"From something that happened that night at Templemore. Some friend of poor Cecil's, I fancy, called Chamberlain."

"If that is all," said Irene, laughing, "I am glad you told me, for I think I can undeceive you. Mr. Chamberlain is married. Cecil told me so that same evening."

"No! is he?" asked Audley eagerly. "After all, it does not make much difference whether he is or not, for she cared, or cares for him more than for me."

"I'm not so sure," she replied; and in a few words she told him of the glimpse Cecil had given her into Beatrix's history, adding—

"If I were you, I should try again some time or other. I used certainly to think she liked you, and perhaps she does; but it is so difficult to tell with a girl of her temperament. She would very likely conceal her feelings when she felt most deeply."

"I wish you would not buoy up my hopes like that," said Audley gloomily, "when I am trying all I can to

forget her; but it's no use—day and night I think about her. I thought going off to those wild regions would have put her out of my head, but it was of no use, and now, since I have come home, it seems worse than ever. I know well enough she won't have me, so there's no good thinking of it. I'll keep you company, Irene, and we will both live and die in single blessedness."

## CHAPTER XXV.

Je voulais tout faire pour les autres et il me semble que j'ai tout fait pour moi-même, je voulais guérir des malades, et j'ai pansé mes blessures, je voulais consoler des affligés et j'ai séché mes larmes, je voulais calmer leurs douleurs, et j'ai perdu l'amertume des miennes, je voulais donner tout et j'ai tout trouvé.—HENRI PERRYER.

THE long cold winter passed away, brightened for all at Endellion by Audley's return. The spring came at last, bringing to all warmth and sunshine and beauty. To Irene, however, it brought many sad memories of the past, when only one short year ago she had been looking forward to her wedding, and to a lifelong union with the one to whom she had given the whole love of her young heart.

How bright the spring had seemed then, when each tiny leaf that appeared on the trees, each little budding plant that appeared above ground, seemed to herald the time to which she was looking forward. But now the spring seemed to her the most trying time of the whole year—

“ When sparrows build, and leaves break forth,  
An old sorrow wakes and cries ;”

and to her the young life and fresh beauty of all around,

when all seemed to speak of love and hope, served only to recall the sad thoughts she vainly tried to repress of the love that had been taken from her, and the long weary life that seemed to stretch out before her into an interminable future. After a time her grief might become less acute, the memories of the past less vivid, but now it seemed at times almost greater than she could bear. Still she contrived to hide her sufferings from others, and rejoiced that she was able to conceal from those who loved her, the pain they could not cure.

The anniversary of Cecil Leighton's death, and of what would have been her wedding-day, came and went. Those around her knew well what she was suffering, but feeling the truth of the words—

“When sorrow sleepeth, wake it not,”

they wisely refrained from offering her any consolation beyond the gentle sympathy conveyed by their looks and manner towards her. She went through the day as usual, only looking a little quieter, a little paler, while her mother's heart ached to see the pain she could not soothe; and yet she felt happy about her on the whole, for since Audley's return she had recovered her former vigour, and went about her daily duties with a cheerful, quiet air, which assured them she was happier.

“She will console herself by and by,” remarked Mrs. Vernon, Lady Veryan's sister, one day during a visit to Endellion. “She looks so much more cheerful already that I should never be surprised to hear of her marrying.



Why, she is so young, and with all life before her, she is sure to find some one else."

"I think not," Lady Veryan replied quietly. "I wish she would, if it were for her happiness, but neither her father nor I would ever urge it, and I know she cared so deeply for poor Cecil, that she will never love again."

"Well, I think that is a pity," continued Mrs. Vernon. "If I were you, I would not let her give way to such fancies, and let her shut herself up altogether."

"I do not think she intends to shut herself up," said Lady Veryan with dignity; "she will not go out this season in London, but by degrees she will resume her old place, though she intends never to go to balls again. I have such perfect confidence in her, that I shall allow her to do exactly what she wishes, and not urge her to do anything contrary to her inclinations. I have always brought up my children on the principle of allowing them to do what they please, as long as they please to do what is right, and I think you will allow that they have justified my confidence in them."

Mrs. Vernon made no reply, feeling perhaps that the same could not be said of her own daughters. She had educated them upon the "wholly worldly" principle, to regard marriage as their one aim and object in life, and provided this was achieved, to care little for the character or antecedents of the men they married. She taught them to look upon love as an unnecessary ingredient, and frequently assured them that she had known *marriages de convenance* turn out more happily

than those founded on what she termed "mere romantic affection."

Educated in such a school, her daughters grew up cool, hard, and calculating, with but little love for their mother, or for any one but themselves. They had profited by her teaching in one respect, that they had all married early ; but their discontented, unsatisfied faces gave sufficient proof of the want of happiness they had found on attaining their ambition.

Early in May Lady Katherine Fitzgerald and her little daughter Dorothy arrived to pay their promised visit at Endellion.

Irene had long been looking forward to her little niece's arrival, for she dearly loved her, and felt that the tender caressing love of a little child would soothe and comfort her. Often when they were alone she would take Dorothy on her knee and tell her long stories of Cecil Leighton, always ending with the words—

"But you know, dear, he is far happier now in Paradise with God and the holy angels, and we will go to meet him there by and by."

"Let us go now, Aunt Irene," Dorothy would reply. "I do not care to stay here any longer, for I know it is much nicer there. I should have no lessons, and I could play all day long, and you wouldn't cry any more, but you would be quite happy with Uncle Cecil."

"We will go in a little while, darling," answered Irene, "but not just yet ; we are not ready now, for we must do our work here first, by trying to love every one, and make

them better and happier ; then when we have finished all we have to do, the angels will come and call us, and we shall be so glad to go,—shall we not ? ”

“ But I wish they would make haste and come. I don’t want to wait any longer, Aunt Irene.”

And then, seeing the tears in her aunt’s eyes, little Dorothy would take out her pocket-handkerchief, and dry them away, and tell her not to cry.

Sometimes, however, Dorothy’s views concerning the happiness of the future state were less definite. One day when she and Irene were alone together, she confided to her aunt some theological difficulties which had been perplexing her mind.

“ Do you really think we shall be happy in heaven, Aunt Irene ? ”

“ Yes, dear child, I am sure of it ; but why should you doubt it ? ”

“ Well, because one day mamma told me that we should wear crowns of gold on our head, and have golden harps in our hands, and I do not at all think I should like that.”

“ Why not, dear ? ” asked Irene, smiling.

“ Because they would be so heavy, and I should feel so tired if I had to hold them. One day grandmamma let me put on her tiara of diamonds, and it made my head ache, and I thought then I should not like to wear a crown always on my head ; and after mamma told me about the harps we were to carry, I went into the large drawing-room, all alone, where the harp is, and I tried to lift it up, and it was so big it tumbled over and made a great noise,

and some of the strings snapped, and mamma came running in and told me I was not to meddle with her harp again ; but you know, auntie, I was only trying what heaven would be like."

"I don't think you need be afraid that the harps in heaven will be like that," replied Irene gently, "and perhaps you will not have to carry one after all, unless you like ; but do not make yourself unhappy, dear child ; we know very little about heaven, except that we shall certainly be very happy there, and that is quite enough, for the Bible tells us so."

"Yes ; but, auntie," continued Dorothy, "you know all it says in the Bible does not come true."

"What do you mean ?" inquired her aunt, surprised at the doubts which evidently perplexed her little niece's mind.

"Why, there's that text that says if we pray we can cast a mountain into the sea, and one day Charlie and I thought we would like to try this at home. But then I thought papa might not like it, as it would spoil the view, for he always says to visitors when they look out of the window, 'That mountain is a fine feature,' just as if it was part of somebody's face ; so I told Charlie we must not move the mountain, for papa would miss it, and ask who had done it, and then he would be angry with us. So then we tried another way, but it did not succeed."

"What was it ?" asked her aunt, much amused at these juvenile ventures of faith, though touched by the literal and childlike interpretation of the words.

"You know, at home," continued Dorothy, "there is a door in the passage, just outside our nursery, and Charlie and I are always being told to shut it for fear baby should crawl through and fall down-stairs, and if we don't shut it nurse calls us back to scold us, and says, 'You'll be the death of the baby, poor lamb, one of these days.' So we thought we would like to cast the door into the sea without telling anybody, and we prayed so hard one night before we went to bed that it might be done while we were asleep, and we were quite sure it would be; so we woke up very early next morning, and Charlie whispered to me to get out of bed and peep out of the door to see if it was gone, for it was so cold he did not want to go himself, and so I went, and the door was still there, and when I told Charlie, he said he wouldn't believe the Bible any more, because his prayers wasn't answered. I said that was naughty, but it did seem very unfair not to move the door—didn't it, auntie?"

Irene could not help smiling at the shock the children's faith had so early received, and Charlie's consequent scepticism, but she answered gently, "No, dear little Dorothy, it was not at all unfair. Don't you know if the door had been taken away, it might have been pleasant for you and Charlie, but the baby would perhaps have fallen down-stairs, and been killed, and you would both have been very sorry?"

"Oh yes, I never thought of that," said Dorothy; "I must tell Charlie that when I go home."

"And so you see, darling," continued Irene, "that when

you are older and ask God for anything that He will not give you, just try to trust Him, and believe that He will, if it is good for you, and if not, He loves you far too much to grant what would do you harm."

"Perhaps I too shall be able to feel this," she continued to herself, as Dorothy ran off to play, "but at present it is hard enough, and all seems what the children would call very unfair. Never mind, I will trust and wait a little longer, and the reason I shall know hereafter."

## CHAPTER XXVI.

There was such a company of joyful flowers as I know not the like of among all the blessings of the earth. It was spring-time too, and all were coming forth in clusters crowded for very love. There was room enough for all, but they crushed their leaves into all manner of strange shapes only to be nearer each other. There was the wood anemone, star after star, closing every now and then into nebulae, and ever and anon a blue gush of violets and cowslip bells in sunny places, and the wild strawberry, just a blossom or two, all showered amidst the golden softness of deep, warm, amber-coloured moss.

RUSKIN'S *Seven Lamps of Architecture*.

BUT not to Irene alone did Dorothy prove a little comforter.

One morning, during breakfast-time, she was seated on the floor playing with her doll Rosalind, the gift of her Uncle Audley, which she prized highly. Her elders were seated round the dining-room table reading their letters, which had just arrived.

"At last!" exclaimed Lady Katherine. "I am sure it is a merciful release for him, poor old man, and for Beatrix too. She was nearly worn out with her close attendance upon him night and day."

"What is it?" asked Lady Veryan.

"A letter from Mrs. Everard," replied her daughter,

"telling me of the death of Sir Michael Fayne. You know he has been seriously ill for some time, and his end was daily expected even before I left Ireland."

"Is it true," asked Irene, "that they were in difficulties, and that this brought on his illness?"

"I fear it is only too true, and Lady Fayne and Beatrix will be left with very little to live upon. The property, you know, is entailed, and passes to a cousin of Sir Michael's, whom they do not much care for, I believe."

"Then I suppose they will leave Faynetower?" said Audley, who was apparently studying the "Field," and paying but little attention to the conversation.

"I fear they will immediately," said Lady Katherine, "and I shall be very sorry for it, for I shall miss Beatrix greatly. We have seen a good deal of her lately, and both Percy and I like her more and more. She is wonderfully softened of late, and has become much quieter and less changeable."

"Mr. Everard will not be inconsolable at Lady Fayne's departure," said Irene, smiling.

"Certainly not," replied her sister; "I should think it would be an unspeakable relief to him to be allowed to manage the parish as he thinks best, without her interfering on every occasion; but Mrs. Everard will miss Beatrix as much as myself. She is very fond of her."

Here a little sob was heard coming from the direction of the floor, and suddenly every one turned to Dorothy, whose presence had been quite forgotten.

She was sitting with Rosalind in her arms, rocking



her to and fro, while the tears trickled slowly down her little face.

"What's the matter, my pet?" said Irene, who was sitting near her, taking up her little niece and placing her on her knee.

Dorothy hid her face on her aunt's shoulder and cried bitterly.

"Tell me, darling," asked Irene gently, "what makes you unhappy. Has Rosalind been naughty? or have you hurt yourself in any way?" she continued, anxiously.

"It—is—only—Aunt—Beatrix," sobbed poor little Dorothy; "she's going away, so I'll never see her again, and I do love her so," she added, with an outbreak of tears.

"Never mind, dear child," said Irene, tenderly, "perhaps she won't go very far away, and you may still see her often."

"I am going to write to Aunt Beatrix to-day," said her mother soothingly, "and you shall put in a little note if you like, and ask her not to go far away."

But still Dorothy remained inconsolable.

"Look here, little woman," exclaimed Audley, rising, "you come along with me to the stables, and we'll take some sugar with us for my hunters, and you shall feed them, and then we'll go round and see Blossom, and the little white puppy you are so fond of."

"O thank you, Uncle Audley, that will be nice," said poor little Dorothy, whose grief seemed somewhat assuaged at the prospect of a visit to the stables; "and may I take Rosalind?"

"By all means," replied her uncle, "if she will honour us with her company."

Accordingly they set off to make the round of the stables, visiting first of all Irene's beautiful white mare Callista, who lowered her graceful head to be caressed by little Dorothy. Then Audley gave some sugar to his two hunters Bismarck and Gambetta ; but Dorothy, who stood in considerable awe of them, remained at a respectful distance. She felt happier when they turned to Blossom, the fox-terrier, with her three little puppies, Blackberry, Briar, and Thistle, and finally paid a visit to Pill, the new retriever, so called by Audley because it was a present from Dr. Oldman.

"Look here, Dorothy," said Audley, when they had finished their rounds, "would you and Rosalind like to come for a walk with me ? I am going down to see the keeper who lives in the Oak Wood, and if you like you may come too, and bring your basket, and gather some flowers while I am talking to him."

"O thank you, uncle," replied Dorothy joyfully, "that would be nice ; but I must go and ask mamma first, and then get my basket."

Lady Katherine readily gave the desired permission, and Dorothy and Audley set off together.

The wood through which they passed was literally carpeted with star-like wood anemones, while sweet-scented violets and primroses grew everywhere in rich luxuriance.

Dorothy was enchanted with the profusion of flowers

scattered around her, she soon filled her little basket, and regretted not having brought a larger one.

"Never mind," said Audley; "here, take my pocket-handkerchief and fill it, while I go and speak to Norman, only don't go far off, for I don't want you to be lost, like the 'babes in the wood.'"

Dorothy busied herself to fill not only her uncle's handkerchief, but her own as well, and by the time she had finished he returned.

"Come along, Dorothy," he said, "I have found a nice sunny place, where we can sit down on a log and arrange your flowers, unless you are in a great hurry to go home and begin lessons?"

"Oh, no, please," she replied, laughing, "I would much rather stay out here with you."

Soon after they had seated themselves, Audley asked suddenly—

"Are you very fond of Aunt Beatrix, Dorothy?"

"Oh yes," she replied, "indeed I am. I do love her—don't you, uncle?"

This was an unexpected question, to which, however, Audley promptly replied—

"Yes."

"I am so glad you do," continued the unconscious Dorothy, "and I am sure Aunt Beatrix loves you too."

"What are you saying, child?" asked Audley, in a tone that caused Dorothy to start and look up in surprise "what makes you say that?"

"Only because she seemed so sorry when I told

you were lost. Mamma was very sorry when she read grandmamma's letter about it, and she cried a little, but she wasn't half so sorry as Aunt Beatrix."

"What ever do you mean, Dorothy?"

"One day," continued the child, "mamma had a letter from Endellion to say they thought you were lost or were never coming home again, for nobody had heard from you for so long, and I was going to Faynetower with Charlie, for Aunt Beatrix had asked us to tea, and when we got there she took me into her room to see all her pretty things, and she asked me how uncle Audley was, and I said mamma thought you were dead."

"But what on earth made you say that?" asked Audley.

"Why," replied his little niece, "because I thought that was what mamma meant. You know grown-up people always say they have 'lost' their friends when they die. I heard mamma tell nurse this morning that Miss Fayne had 'lost' her father."

"Well, never mind about that," said Audley impatiently, "what did Aunt Beatrix say when you told her?"

"She didn't say anything," continued Dorothy, "but she looked very pale, and went away to another part of the room, and when she came back she looked as if she had been crying, and I put my arms round her and told her not to cry. Then she took me on her knee and kissed me, and said, 'Dear little Dorothy, I can't help it, for I was once very unkind to some one, and that makes me very unhappy,' and then she said quite gravely, 'Mind,

Dorothy, if ever you like any one who likes you, don't pretend not to care.' "

"Did she really say that?" asked Audley eagerly.

"Yes," answered Dorothy, "but I did not know what she meant; and then she told me not to tell mamma she had been crying, for it was only because she had a headache."

"What did you do after that?" inquired Audley, anxious to obtain as much information as possible through this unexpected source.

"We went down-stairs, and Charlie asked Aunt Beatrix to sing us a song, but she only sang one he didn't care for, all about a Mr. Douglas who wouldn't come back when they asked him. Charlie said it was a very stupid song, but it made me feel very sad, for it made Aunt Beatrix begin to cry again, and so she didn't finish it."

"And then you went home?" asked her uncle, who displayed a great interest in each stage of the proceedings.

"Oh no, we went into the dining-room for tea, and there were such lots of cake, and fruit, and jam, and such good things, and Aunt Beatrix gave us as much as ever we liked. But just as she was giving me some more jam, Lady Fayne came into the room and said, 'One helping was thought sufficient, Beatrix, when I was a child.' I should not like to be Lady Fayne's little girl—should you, Uncle Audley?"

"Certainly not," replied Audley, smiling, adding *sotto voce*, "I wouldn't so much mind being her son-in-law for all that, for I would take precious good care to keep clear of her."

"Look here, Dorothy," he said after a long pause, "you're a good child, and have given me no trouble this morning, so, if you like, I'll often take you and Rosalind out with me, and you can tell me more about all you and Charlie do at home."

"Oh, thank you, uncle!" exclaimed Dorothy in delight, "how kind you are! I will be so good, and I will take care that Rosalind does not give you any trouble."

They walked slowly homewards through the wood, Audley holding his little niece's hand, who tripped along merrily by his side, though regretting every moment that she was obliged to tread on the beautiful flowers which carpeted their path.

"Where have you been?" inquired Dorothy's anxious mother, who was standing on the steps of the front door watching for them; "we thought you were lost, or that something had happened to the child, for luncheon is over and you never appeared. What have you been doing?"

"Only gathering primroses and violets in the wood," replied her brother carelessly; "we could not have been more innocently employed, Katherine, so you might have spared yourself much maternal anxiety."

With this new hope Audley found the life at Endellion resume its old attractions. Little Dorothy was now his constant companion. Every morning she went round the stables with him, visited the dogs, interviewed the keepers, and superintended many improvements on the estate.

Irene declared her occupation was gone, as her office of companion to her brother was now filled by her little niece, though she was unaware of the cause of Dorothy's sudden elevation to favour. The knowledge he had thus gained of Beatrix's feelings towards himself he regarded as sacred, well knowing that she could have little suspected that such a revelation could ever reach his ears, but the knowledge filled him with new hope and happiness.

If he could only see her and urge his suit, telling her how, after the first bitter disappointment of her refusal, his love for her had returned, and how no endeavour on his part to forget her had succeeded. He turned over in his mind many plans for renewing their acquaintance, but he felt it must be done cautiously, for with Beatrix's character it was impossible to tell how she might receive him, or whether she would again allow him to plead his cause. Sometimes he feared that the mood in which Dorothy had found her might have been a merely passing feeling of sadness or remorse, such as she might have expressed on hearing of the supposed death of a slight acquaintance. Probably when she knew her fears for his safety were groundless, her feelings towards him had assumed another form.

He could not tell; he was harassed with constant doubts on the subject, all the more because he felt that in consequence of Sir Michael's recent death he could not pay a rapid visit to Oriel Court, and learn his fate at once from Beatrix's own lips.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

Enough ! we're tired, my heart and I ;  
We sit beside the headstone thus,  
And wish that name were carved for us.

E. B. BROWNING.

SIR MICHAEL FAYNE'S funeral had taken place. Beatrix had wished to follow her father's remains to their last resting-place, and to be present while words of hope and comfort were spoken over them, but her mother would not allow it.

"Ladies were out of place on such occasions," Lady Fayne had said severely, and "she thought Beatrix ought to know better than to wish to appear in public at such times. No one could think she had not paid every tribute of respect to her husband's memory. She had spared no expense, for all the arrangements had been as costly as possible."

This was indeed true, as all could testify who saw the long array of mourning-coaches, mutes, scarves, hat-bands, and all the gloomy paraphernalia that could possibly be collected to deaden feelings of hope, and apparently represent the death of the soul as well as of the body.



Nothing was there to testify to the "sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection." All seemed to speak of hopeless, cheerless gloom.

"I wonder if mamma believes in the immortality of the soul," said Beatrix to herself as she watched the sad cortège winding its way down the long avenue towards the church, where Mr. Everard awaited it; and then, unable to control her pent-up feelings any longer, she went to her room and shut herself in, to indulge in the agony of grief she had so long suppressed. All she loved had now gone from her, and she was left alone—worse than alone—to endure the society of a mother whom she felt had never really loved or understood her, and who, try as she might, would do nothing but find fault with her from morning to night.

The father she had loved so passionately and nursed so tenderly had been taken from her, and the blank was greater than she could bear. He had long been her one thought, and the patient way in which she had borne the irritability caused by his illness, the brightness and cheerfulness with which she was ever ready to answer to his call, night or day, had won for her the lasting respect of Mr. Everard and all who witnessed her conduct.

But now nothing remained for her to do, no one needed her. Soon after her father's death, when her heart was yearning for sympathy, she had thrown her arms round her mother's neck and cried passionately—

"Mamma, let us be friends now, for I am so lonely, and I will try to be a good daughter to you."

Lady Fayne disengaged herself from her daughter's embrace, saying coldly—

“You know, Beatrix, I do not like scenes. You should try and cultivate self-command. Yes, I hope you will be more what I could wish in future, for your poor father always spoiled you.”

“He always loved me, which no one does now,” said Beatrix, in a voice trembling with emotion, as she left the room, vowing secretly that she would never again attempt another “scene” with her mother.

A fortnight passed away spent in preparations for their approaching departure.

Faynetower would pass at once into the hands of the next heir, a distant cousin, with whom Sir Michael had never been on friendly terms.

The property had become much encumbered through the late owner's extravagance and bad management, and Lady Fayne and her daughter would be left, for some time at least, in very straitened circumstances.

To Beatrix the thought of leaving her dear old home, every nook and corner of which was endeared to her from many associations, was almost as great a grief as her father's death. Here the people knew and loved her, she had grown up amongst them, and she clung to their warm-hearted affection.

She felt, too, leaving her best friends, the Everards, and Lady Katherine Fitzgerald and her children, and being cut off (though this she hardly acknowledged even to herself) from all hope of meeting Audley again, for at times

she clung to the belief that he would return, and all would be made right between them.


And then to leave the sea, and mountains, and rocks, the wild free life she so dearly loved, to part from Leo and her favourite hunter, and all the pursuits she so much enjoyed, to migrate to a roadside villa in a cockneyfied little seaside place such as Seaforde, where her mother intended to make their home.

"I must put on gloves and a veil every time I go outside the doors," she said to Mrs. Everard, "and be ready to bow and smile to all the got-up young ladies I meet, with their smart dresses, looking as if they had done nothing but walk up and down a parade all their lives. How I shall hate the sight of them!"

"How does your mother like the thought of Seaforde?" asked Mr. Everard; "I fear she will feel leaving Faynetower greatly."

"Not the least," replied Beatrix. "I believe she has never cared for it. She is quite looking forward to being there, for, you know her sister, Mrs. Sharpham, lives there, and some clergyman they are both equally devoted to, who is far more orthodox than Mr. Everard, and my mother is looking forward to the privilege of sitting under him."

But now the last day had come, the last leave-takings had been made, while all expressed heartfelt regret at the departure of "their young lady." The rooms were dismantled, the great hall filled with packing-cases of every description, and all was ready for an early start the next



morning. Beatrix felt worn out, both in mind and body, with all she had gone through lately ; for her father's long illness and the constant attendance upon him had told upon her considerably. Still she resolved upon taking Leo for a farewell walk, and then leaving him at the rectory on her way home. She had given him to Mr. Everard, who, she knew, would take every care of him, as her mother absolutely refused to allow him to accompany them to Seaforde.

"Come along, dear Leo," she said, caressing him affectionately, "this will be our last walk for a long time to come—perhaps for ever, for I shall never come back here again. Mrs. Everard has asked me to come and stay with her whenever I like, but I could not bear to see Faynetower in other hands."

Leo licked his mistress's hand, and looked up into her face with an expression of mute sympathy in his large expressive eyes, which caused her to bend down and cover his head with kisses.

"My dear, dear old Leo, how I shall miss you!" she exclaimed, while the tears stood in her eyes.

They took a path which led to Beatrix's favourite walk: up a steep ascent they wound between rocks and stones round the hillside, covered with wild thyme and heather, until they came to a level place almost hidden between the mountains, but commanding a magnificent view of the valley, the lough, and the sea beyond. In this sequestered place stood the ruins of an old chapel, while around it might be seen various stone crosses and monuments, which

marked the last resting-place of the now forgotten dead. Most of the inscriptions were obliterated by time, and the few that remained were almost illegible. Amongst them, however, stood a large quaintly-carved stone cross, with neither name nor date to give any clew to the history of the one who lay below, and on it was traced the following touching inscription in Old English letters, which seemed to defy the ravages of time and weather :—

*Jesus, for Thy Passion's sake,  
Have mercy on my sinful heart.*

No one had ever been able to discover any legend or history to account for these pathetic words, appealing as they did from the soul to God, with a cry which could not have been uttered in vain.

The mystery connected with this inscription had always possessed an attraction for Beatrix, and often in the course of her long rambles she would turn aside to rest by this lonely grave, which had a peculiar fascination for her.

Here she would come with Leo when things went wrong at home, or when she found her mother especially trying. To this place she had come again and again after Audley's departure, and many an outburst of grief and remorse had that silent cross witnessed. Perhaps its teaching, its yearning cry for help and pardon, had unconsciously taught her many a lesson. Frequently she would go away repeating almost mechanically the words she knew so well, and finding rest in the prayer of one who had centuries before passed from the trials and troubles of earth.

This evening she had come to take farewell of her favourite resort. She sat down on the grass and rested her head against the old stone cross. Never before had the scene at her feet looked so beautiful as it did now in the light of the setting sun. Beneath her lay her dearly-loved home, Faynetower, which she was about to leave for ever; further off she saw the lough, studded with little green islands and small white cottages on the shore, whose inhabitants she had known from childhood; while at some distance she watched the waves breaking over the rocky bar which divided the lough from the wide sea beyond. At length her eyes rested upon Oriel Court, which she could see appearing through the trees, and this recalled her thoughts to a subject from which they were never long absent. Memories of Audley, of the happy autumn they had spent together, of his love for her, and her conduct towards him, all crowded upon her mind, and she felt no other place would ever be the same to her which was not hallowed with the same mixture of happy and painful reminiscences. She knew he had returned safely; she had heard this some time ago from Lady Katherine; but beyond this fact she knew nothing. At first a thrill of joy had passed through her heart to think that he was alive and well and once more in England, and the thought of infinite possibilities in the future filled her with hope.

But these soon died away as she heard nothing more of him, and she sometimes felt it would have been easier to hear of his death than to think he was separated from her

for ever—perhaps marrying some one else, ignorant of the deep and increasing love she felt for him.

One little ray of comfort had, however, reached her.

Soon after Sir Michael's death, Irene Veryan had written to her a kind letter, saying how fully she could feel for her, from having so lately gone through great sorrow herself, adding as a postscript—

“My brother wishes to be remembered kindly to you, and begs you to accept his heartfelt sympathy.”

This letter had conveyed much comfort to Beatrix ; she treasured it carefully, always wearing it near her heart, and whenever she felt most desponding about the future, she would take it out and read it, though already well knowing every word. The admiration she had ever felt for Irene was increased by the beautiful and patient way in which she had borne her great trial—going out of herself into others, and living for them, instead of selfishly nursing her grief, as many would have done under the circumstances. Of this Beatrix had heard from Lady Katherine, and in the midst of her own sorrow her thoughts frequently turned to Irene, and she resolved to try and follow her example.

She lingered as long as she could by the old cross, to which she would probably never return. She felt she ought to go home to her mother, but, before leaving she read Irene's letter once more, and when she had ended it, kissed the postscript several times and folded it up.

The peaceful calm of the old churchyard, the stillness

and beauty of the scene around, filled her mind at length with calmer and more hopeful thoughts.

At length she rose, and said half aloud—

“Ah well! life does not look very cheerful at present, but I will try to live it out bravely, and it will be all the same a hundred years hence.”

Calling Leo, she gave one last look at the ruined chapel, the quiet graves, and the old stone cross, then descended the steep rocky path and went to the rectory. Here she took a long farewell of Leo and the Everards, and then returned with weary steps and sorrowful heart to spend the last night in the dear old home.



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

Cultivate the great art of leaving people alone; never ridicule other people's tastes, especially those of the people who live with you, unless they are absolutely disagreeable or mischievous. What perfection there would be in domestic life if the courtesy and civility which strangers show to us, were combined with the affection and absence of restraint which belongs to domesticity.—REALMAH.

It was the month of September,—Sir Michael had died in May,—and Lady Fayne and her daughter had now been settled for three months at Seaforde. For the first year, and indeed until by strict economy they had paid off all Sir Michael's debts, their income would be so small that they decided to relinquish the idea of having a house of their own, and take instead some "furnished apartments" which Mrs. Sharpham had found for them, at a very moderate rent.

Lady Fayne felt the descent keenly, but to Beatrix it mattered little (now that she had left the one place she cared for on earth) whether she lived in a large house or a small one, whether she was waited upon by men-servants in livery, or by a maid in a print dress.

She found the life at Seaforde better than she anticipated, for, owing to their late loss, she was exempted for

some time from entering the society of the place, an event to which she did not look forward with pleasure.

The young ladies of Seaforde, who occasionally met her in her walks, thought "how dull she must be, poor thing, shut up with an old mother, or else taking those stupid walks all by herself, instead of coming down on to the Parade and hearing the band, which would be more lively for her." They doubted, however, whether she would be much acquisition, for they had heard she was a great flirt, and rather given to be "fast," and they did not think they would care much about her.

Their brothers meanwhile were of a different opinion.

"Who's that stunning girl I saw in church yesterday," asked one, "dressed in deep mourning? I never saw such eyes, and there's something about her altogether that will put all the Seaforde belles into the shade pretty soon."

"She's only a Miss Fayne," replied his sister, "the daughter of an old Lady Fayne, who looks like a prim, starched, old Puritan. I'm sure I'm glad we don't know her. I expect they are very poor, for they've taken those little lodgings in North Road that no one would take if they had a sixpence to spare. Mamma does not intend to call on them," she continued, with an air of superiority.

"Not call on them!" exclaimed her brother; "I like that! Well, all I can say is, that I've not seen a girl to come up to that Miss Fayne in looks for some time, and it would do you a great deal of good to know her. Matilda, I'll just tell mother she must make their acquaintance, that's all."

This fraternal desire for her improvement did not seem to call forth the grateful feelings one might have anticipated in the mind of Matilda Perkins.

"You only care for a pretty face, Cuthbert," she replied. "Miss Fayne is not the sort of girl *I* should care for, so there's an end of it," and to give more force to her sarcasm, she left the room with her head in the air.

"Is it though?" said her brother, laughing. "I think I know well enough how to manage mother, and she'll do what I like. Matilda is such a goose—just because father has made a good speculation lately, and we have got into a larger house, and set up carriages and horses, which we never had before in our lives, she thinks fit to look down on every one that's not so rich as herself. Such nonsense! it's much more likely these Faynes won't care to know us, for old families that have come down in the world don't care so much for *nouveaux riches*."

Meanwhile the object of these remarks went on her way, utterly unconscious of the family dissensions caused by her presence at Seaforde.

She avoided the Parade and other places of public resort, and found her chief pleasure in long lonely walks along the sands, which stretched for miles on each side of the town. She greatly missed the companionship of her faithful Leo, but she received good accounts of him from Mr. Everard, though the tears came to her eyes as she read of his frequent expeditions to Faynetower, where he would roam about as though in search of his lost mistress.

The invigorating air, the out-of-door exercise, the free-

dom of being able to do much as she liked, all seemed, however, to have a beneficial effect upon her health—both of mind and body.

Her mother, who had never cared for Faynetower, seemed happy in the society of her sister, Mrs. Sharpham, with whom she had much in common, and this left Beatrix more free to follow her own inclinations. The sorrow through which she had lately passed, as well as her long and bitter repentance for her conduct towards Audley, had awakened her to the realities of life. It had been “strong to consume small troubles,” and in its light the petty vexations and contradictions she daily endured from her, seemed to lose their importance.

“What does it matter?” she would frequently say to herself when Lady Fayne was particularly *exigeante* or given to find fault, “I have gone through enough real sorrow lately to show me how small and unimportant such little troubles really are,” and then, to her mother’s surprise she would quietly acquiesce in her wishes, or cheerfully obey the dictatorial command. She set herself steadfastly to fulfil her father’s constant wish that she and her mother might be more to one another, though at times she found it so difficult, and her overtures so frequently repulsed by coldness or disdain, as almost to give up in despair.

“I am studying a new branch of knowledge,” she wrote to Mrs. Everard, “which is the ‘art of living with others,’ and of all the studies I have ever taken up, I find this by far the most difficult. As you well know, mamma and I are naturally antagonistic,—we have hardly a thought in

common ; but, as she will not adapt herself to me, I am endeavouring to fit in with her. I try to take an interest in her pet ideas, instead of being surprised that she shows no sympathy with mine, so perhaps by degrees we shall get on better."

"Beatrix," said Lady Fayne one morning, "I have received a letter from your cousin, who is now at Faynetower, which I fear will oblige me to go back into our old neighbourhood. I find he wishes to claim some land there to which he is not entitled, and therefore I must see about it myself without loss of time."

"But, mamma, could not I go for you?" replied her daughter; "it will be so painful for you to go back there again."

"You understand nothing of business, Beatrix," said Lady Fayne coldly, "and therefore I should not think of trusting you upon such an important errand. This letter tells me also of what a favourable impression your cousin has made on all in the neighbourhood, and he seems very popular with the tenants."

"*Le roi est mort—vive le roi*," replied Beatrix bitterly; "it is always the way. You will stay with the Everards, will you not, mamma?" she added with an effort; "I am sure they will be glad to have you, and to be of any use they can to you."

"No," replied her mother, "I shall not stay at the Everards'. I shall ask Mrs. Temple to take me in for a few days, which will be sufficient. I will ask your aunt to let you remain with her in my absence."

"Oh, please let me stay here!" exclaimed Beatrix; "I shall be quite happy all alone, and I would far rather not go to Aunt Augusta."

"I wish I could see you care more for my sister," remarked Lady Fayne; "she is a most estimable person, and you never seem to appreciate the advantages of her society. Well, you may stay here, but formerly you were not so fond of solitude."

"It was different then," replied Beatrix with a sigh; but she felt considerably relieved at the permission to remain at home, instead of being condemned to the uncongenial society of her aunt.

"There is another letter I forgot to show you," continued her mother, "which I received a few days ago from my cousin, Mary Thorne, asking us to spend the month of October with them at their place in the Highlands."

"It is very kind of her," replied Beatrix; "but how could she imagine we would go?"

"I said she must not expect me, but that I would send you for a short visit."

"Mamma!" cried Beatrix indignantly, "you never consulted me! How could you say I would go? Nothing would induce me to stay with the Thornes, who have always a houseful of people—or, in fact, with any one—when I have so lately lost my father."

"I hope I know what is proper without having you to teach me," replied her mother, "but in this nineteenth century the fifth commandment is reversed, and we must learn it afresh—'Parents, obey your children.' Well, I

mean to exercise my parental authority as long as I can, so I have decided you *are* to go to Scotland. I think the change of air will do you good."

"But, mamma, I am perfectly well, and I cannot and will not go among strangers so soon. I should be utterly heartless if I could care to go there, with a number of people staying in the house for the shooting, when I should have to talk and amuse them from morning to night, while I felt miserable all the time. Indeed I will not go."

"Beatrix," said her mother sternly, "do not be so foolish. It is some months since your father's death, and he would have been the last person to wish you to shut yourself up. If you read Mary Thorne's letter, you will see she says they are to be quite alone, as her husband is far from strong, and not able to have a houseful as usual this autumn."

"But, mamma—" began Beatrix.

"Never mind," replied her mother, "I have written to accept for you, so there is an end of it; you have certainly been more ready to consult my wishes lately in many respects, so I hope to see you do the same in this case."

This intelligence was a great shock to Beatrix, who dreaded the idea of going among comparative strangers so soon after her father's death. Mr. and Mrs. Thorne were people of whom she knew but little, and with whom she had not much in common. He was a Member of Parliament, possessed of considerable wealth and of large properties both in England and Scotland. Mrs. Thorne was a cousin of Lady Fayne's, and she and her husband, though

kind-hearted people, were dull and prosaic to the last degree. They had no children, they would not have any visitors on account of Mr. Thorne's illness, and the thought of being shut up with them for a whole month filled Beatrix with dismay. Still, what could she do? Her mother had written to accept the invitation for her without consulting her on the subject; and at last, finding remonstrance useless, she decided to acquiesce without any further opposition.



## CHAPTER XXIX.


Conversation fills all gaps, supplies all deficiencies. What a good trait is that recorded of Madame de Maintenon, that, during dinner, the servant slipped to her side—"Please, madame, one anecdote more, for there is no roast to-day."—EMERSON.

LADY FAYNE had departed, and Beatrix was enjoying a time of comparative peace and quiet, only interrupted from time to time by the incursions of her Aunt Augusta, who considered it her duty to look after her niece in Lady Fayne's absence, and to administer the advice or reproof she considered necessary. Formerly Beatrix would have resented this as an impertinent intrusion, but now it mattered little to her what her aunt did or said. She went on her way absorbed in her own thoughts, living in the memory of the past so completely that her present life seemed a merely mechanical routine. The autumn was a time she always dreaded, bringing as it did painful associations connected with former days, which she vainly tried to overcome. Now that she was left entirely to herself, she had time to conjure up the past so vividly, and to live each scene over again in thought, that she felt becoming more and more unfitted for her daily life. The

present seemed one dreary monotonous round of duty, from the thought of which she was only too glad to escape even for a few moments. Gradually, therefore, the thought of the visit to Scotland became more welcome to her, as she felt that change of any kind would be preferable to the dreamy, unreal existence she was now living—so unlike her former days of constant activity, when she joined in all her father's pursuits, riding, hunting, sailing on the lough, or taking long walks with him over his property, now theirs no longer.

A few days after her mother's departure she received a letter which, for the time at least, considerably changed the current of her thoughts. It was to announce the arrival in Ireland for a short tour of some English cousins, the Mainwarings. She had occasionally stayed with them at their place in Lincolnshire, and always felt thankful when the visit was ended.

Jane and Eleanor, who were about her own age, were possessed of but few ideas, in fact, all they had might be expressed in one word, "propriety." This was the aim and object of their existence, and one which they certainly managed to attain. "Extremely well-brought-up girls" was the verdict passed upon them by all their friends, and one which Beatrix fully indorsed. They were to her the exact type of English girls—staid and prim, and with no life or "go" in them. Having but one idea themselves, her own versatility and many-sidedness astonished them beyond measure, while her high spirits and fondness for out-of-door pursuits made them regard her as "that wild Irish girl."



Their brother Charles was in the Guards. He had an exceedingly high opinion of himself, and a supreme contempt for all human beings who were not included in "his set." He thought little of Beatrix, as she had not responded with due gratitude to his condescending attentions, but preferred his younger brother, a bright, merry lieutenant in the navy, with whom she had become firm friends on her last visit to Lincolnshire.

Great was her dismay therefore, when a letter reached her from Jane Mainwaring, informing her that she, with Charles and Eleanor, were now in Dublin on their way to Killarney, but as they wished to pay a visit to their aunt and cousin, they would come to the hotel at Seaforde for one night, and hoped to dine and spend the evening at the Faynes' house.

"What am I to say to them?" thought Beatrix in despair. "They think we are in a house of our own, and not in miserable little lodgings like these, with hardly room to turn round; and to think of that pompous creature Charles coming here! He will survey everything with a supercilious air, and say 'he supposes this is the way Irish people live;' and then Jane and Eleanor, what remarks they will make on everything, and how surprised they will be at our poor little *ménage*! I really must devise some excuse. I would not the least mind entertaining the Fitzgeralds, or the Everards, or even the Veryans, but to have the Mainwarings is too appalling to contemplate."

On reading the letter over again, however, Beatrix found

that it contained no further address than "Dublin, Monday," being the very day on which she received it, and it did not mention the name of the hotel they intended to patronise at Seaforde.

What was to be done? She could not put them off, and yet there remained so little time for the necessary preparations for this sudden dinner-party. She nevertheless resolved to make the best of it, and to use her ingenuity to the best possible advantage, that, after all, they might not discover any deficiencies in her household arrangements.

She hastily summoned Mrs. Mahony, the mistress of the lodging-house, and informed her of the unexpected descent of her relatives, adding that she almost feared it would be impossible to accommodate so many guests in their small room, or to prepare all that they would require on such short notice.

"Just you be aisy now, me dear," replied the good-natured Mrs. Mahony, with whom Beatrix was a great favourite; "it's meself that will be glad enough to help ye, and ye shall have some of me best silver, that poor Patrick left me afore he died. Sure enough it's not much I have, not more than a spoon or two, but there it is, at yer service."

"Thank you very much, Mrs. Mahony," said Beatrix; "but do you really think we can manage it? I know the cooking will be excellent, but are you sure that Molly can manage the waiting, and that you have enough of everything for so large a party?"

"Lave it all to me now ; don't you distress yerself one bit about it. I'll send ye up a dinner fit for the Queen on her throne, and we'll make shift somehow with what I've got, so ye needn't be unaisy. We'll show these English people how potatoes is boiled. I heard tell they couldn't do them nohow over in their country. I'll give them some they won't forget in a hurry, or my name's not Mary Mahony."

Thus reassured, Beatrix went her way with a lighter heart, though inwardly dreading the result of such an unlooked-for occurrence as a dinner-party in a lodging-house, and heartily she wished that the evening was over.

She did all she could to make their little room as pretty as possible, and then proceeded to a neighbouring florist to expend her small store of pocket-money upon flowers with which to decorate the dinner-table. Her preparations ended, she sat down to await the arrival of her visitors with much inward trepidation, feeling it would be irksome enough at best, but fearing, in spite of her precautions, many unseen *contretemps* might occur.

At half-past seven punctually, a fly drove up to the door, from which her cousins alighted, and, on entering the little sitting-room, Beatrix was somewhat surprised to find them all *en grande tenue*, their dresses more suited to a large London dinner-party than to a small lodging-house.

She herself was dressed as plainly as possible in deep mourning, and with no ornaments. She greeted them cordially, and hoped they would excuse the deficiencies of her *ménage*, adding that, had they given her longer notice,

she would have warned them what to expect, and advised them to make some other arrangement.

"We did not expect to find things the same as at Faynetower," said Jane coldly, "but we thought you would be glad to see us, and we arranged to come down here for a night at considerable inconvenience to ourselves."

"I am very sorry you should have done so," replied Beatrix heartily.

Meanwhile Charles, who had not as yet vouchsafed to make a remark, was surveying the room with a lordly air, mentally commenting upon the astonishing vulgarity of the wall-paper, the atrocious ornaments decorating the mantelpiece, and the gigantic mirror, and wondering how his aunt and cousin could inhabit such "an awful hole." Eleanor, thinking it would show a want of good manners to notice the furniture of her cousin's apartment, contented herself with critically observing Beatrix without speaking.

At length this trying time was cut short by a head appearing round the half-open door, and a voice in a strong Irish brogue remarking, "Will ye please to come in now?"

"I suppose that is our summons to dinner," said Beatrix, smiling, as her cousin offered his arm to escort her to the adjoining room, Jane and Eleanor following behind with due solemnity.

To her surprise she found Molly attired in a gorgeous array, which was intended to do honour to the occasion, but which, unfortunately, presented a highly incongruous appearance.

Mrs. Mahony, anxious to do all she could for Miss

Fayne's visitors, had lent Molly her own Sunday gown, a sky-blue silk, with broad stripes of various colours meandering over it. The mistress being, unfortunately, considerably taller than the maid, much inconvenience was experienced by the latter in her rapid journeys round the table, in consequence of which she was unable to restrain various exclamations more audible than edifying. To add to the variety of her costume she wore a brilliant red tie round her neck, with long embroidered ends, which waved in the air as she moved, while her cap, put on hastily, had a tendency to incline more to one side than the other.

At first Beatrix could hardly maintain her gravity, but her thoughts were instantly recalled to the probable effect it would have upon her highly correct cousins; she saw Eleanor and Charles exchange glances, as the latter raised his eyebrows, and heartily did she wish that Molly had remained in her ordinary attire.

Soon, however, she found that all was not to proceed as smoothly as she had hoped. The soup was on the table, but only two soup-plates had appeared, while, by their side, stood two small tea-cups.

"Mrs. Mahony says, plase ma'am," hastily explained Molly, "that she hopes ye'll make shift with them cups; the other plates is broke."

"But where's the soup-ladle, Molly?" asked Beatrix anxiously.

"It's in here, ma'am," replied Molly, removing the cover of the soup-tureen, and disclosing the ladle floatir

about, buoyed up by a large cork attached to it instead of a handle; "it was meself broke off the handle, we was in such a hurry dishing up, but Mrs. Mahony just fixed the cork on, and thought it would do finely."

Beatrix looked at her cousins and laughed, hoping they would do the same; but no sense of the ludicrous seemed to cross their minds, for they sat with imperturbable faces, apparently ignoring the humour of the situation.

"I hope this is not a specimen of what we are to expect at each course," thought Beatrix, but she skilfully maintained the conversation as though nothing unforeseen had occurred, asking information about her cousins' intended tour, and giving advice as to the best route for them to take. Her spirits began to rise as all went smoothly enough during the following courses of fish and *entrées*, but when these were ended Molly left the room, and there was a protracted pause, which Beatrix vainly tried to cover by relating anecdotes of the beggars at Killarney and of the adventures she had met with there.

Some time passed, and as no further signs of dinner appeared to be forthcoming, she requested Charles to ring the bell.

Molly arrived in breathless haste to answer the summons, and putting her head in at the door, said, "Would you plase to spake to me, ma'am?"

Beatrix had hardly reached the door, when, in an audible whisper, Molly announced the fact that the chicken would be up directly, "but shure enough the clean plates was all done, and she and the mistress was busy washing them."



Beatrix returned to her seat, saying, "I must apologise for the delay, of which you have, I think, heard the cause."

Her cousins made no reply, but sat patiently awaiting the chicken and the clean plates, while she heartily wished she had never been so rash as to embark in this disastrous party—one she would never forget as long as she lived. At length, after a long pause, the plates were washed, the chicken appeared, and the prospect seemed brighter.

But another *contretemps* had yet to be surmounted, fortunately the last, for Beatrix's patience and conversational powers had both been too severely taxed to hold out much longer. Suddenly Molly appeared on the scene with a large wooden bowl filled with Mrs. Mahony's *chef-d'œuvre*, potatoes, boiled in their skins; and before handing them, she proceeded to place a little wooden platter beside each plate.

"What is this for, Beatrix?" exclaimed Charles Mainwaring; "is it a new invention to supersede crockery? or perhaps to prevent your countrymen using so dangerous a weapon in fighting with each other."

Before his hostess had time to reply, Molly interposed—"It's for yer skins, yer honour; and would you be plased to let me chuse a better pratie for ye? those ye've got is none of the best;" and, without waiting for a reply, she seized upon one of the largest potatoes, with fingers far from clean, and placed it upon his plate, a favour which she bestowed upon each guest in turn.

"Molly! Molly!" exclaimed Beatrix in utter despair, "do leave that dish alone, and let us help ourselves.

"We will ring for you when we want you," she continued to the astonished Molly, who seemed much surprised that her zeal was only repaid by speedy dismissal.

The evening at last came to an end, though to Beatrix it had seemed interminable, and her visitors took their leave, to her intense relief.

"What a comfort it is over!" she exclaimed, as she sank into a chair; "but as long as I live I will never attempt to give another dinner-party in a lodging-house, at least not to stupid English people who can see no fun in anything. I will console myself, however, by writing to Mrs. Everard to-morrow, and I think it will afford her some amusement."

"What an extraordinary experience!" remarked Charles Mainwaring to his sisters, as they drove away from the door; "if I had only had the remotest idea of what it would be like, nothing would have induced me to spend an evening there."

"It is just like Beatrix," replied Jane; "she is one of those scatter-brained girls who have no common sense, and no idea of how to make a house comfortable."

## CHAPTER XXX.

There's a bliss beyond all that the minstrels have told,  
When two that are linked in one heavenly tie,  
With heart never changing, and love never cold,  
Love on through all ills, and love on till they die.

MOORE.

"I WANT to know, Beatrix, if you would mind meeting one or two of our neighbours at dinner to-morrow?" asked Mrs. Thorne, a few days after Beatrix had arrived at Glencolin; "you shall do exactly as you wish, my dear, but it would be a great assistance to me if you would help me to entertain them, and sing to them in the evening."

"If it is a regular dinner-party, I would rather not appear," replied Beatrix; "but otherwise I should be delighted to help you in any way I could."

"Oh no," replied Mrs. Thorne; "my husband has only asked Colonel Lestrangle to shoot with him, and to dine and sleep afterwards, but he replied he had a friend staying with him, whom he could not leave, so we were obliged to ask the friend too. I do not know who he is, as Colonel Lestrangle did not give his name."

"But do you expect no one else?"

"Well, I thought certainly of asking the two Miss

Macgregors to come over from Inverstratton; they are bright, lively girls, and would help to make the evening go off well."

"It would be very pleasant," replied Beatrix; "I like the Macgregors; they have plenty to say for themselves, though they have such broad Scotch accents that it is often difficult to understand what they mean."

"I am glad you like them," said Mrs. Thorne, "for I wanted especially to have them to-morrow. I have often suspected that Colonel Lestrangle has a *penchant* for Cecily, and I should like to further it if possible, though I do not know what her feelings are on the subject."

"Really, Mrs. Thorne," replied Beatrix, laughing, "you are the greatest match-maker I know. Do tell me if you have ever been successful?"

"Often, my dear, often; why, it is the easiest thing in the world. I enjoy nothing so much as bringing young people together who, I think, will suit each other, and then, directly I see any intimacy springing up between them, I give a little hint here, or a little word there, and all goes on much more smoothly in consequence."

"I should have been afraid it might have had the opposite effect."

"You must do it judiciously, I allow," remarked Mrs. Thorne; "most people mar more than they make when they meddle in such things, but, you see, I direct my attention to the subject, and, having no children, and no cares of my own, I am free to promote the happiness of other people."

"You are certainly very philanthropic," said Beatrix, smiling; "it is quite a new channel of usefulness, and one which very few would like to embark in."

"Well, my dear, perhaps that is just as well; for, as I say, all could not devote themselves to it as I do. You know I am not intellectual, and I do not care for reading and literature, and all that sort of thing that women are mad about just now; but I study human nature more than you think, and the consequence is I discover more about people than they imagine."

"But why," asked Beatrix, "should you wish every one to marry? I think many are happy enough single."

"You see, my dear," replied Mrs. Thorne, "I know what a very happy marriage is myself, and I wish others to be equally fortunate. Certainly, if people are unsuited to each other, there can be no greater purgatory than marriage; but, on the other hand, if they love one another, I cannot imagine anything happier on earth, at least this has been my experience. I divide all humanity into two classes, married and single, and if I find they belong to the latter, my one desire is to transfer them to the former."

"I hope she will never try her match-making propensities upon me," thought Beatrix, as Mrs. Thorne left the room; "I intend to remain among the 'single' all my life, and to resist all overtures to the contrary. If only I had not thrown away recklessly my one chance of happiness, for I have never met any one else with whom marriage could be endurable! I cannot think how some girls can rush into it as they do, for the mere sake of being married."

To me it would be a hateful bondage, unless one loved with one's whole heart and soul, and was equally loved in return."

Fearing, however, to awaken the memories she now tried to banish from her mind, she rose and went out for a long walk by herself over the moor, taking the dogs with her, for, during Mr. Thorne's illness, they had been out but seldom. This was the chief enjoyment of her life at Glencolin, for the wild freedom of the moors, the exhilarating air, and the beautiful scenery, all reminded her of the walks round her old home in Ireland, and though Mr. Thorne's dogs by no means equalled Leo, she really liked them, while they in return showed her much demonstrative affection.

On the day which Mrs. Thorne had fixed for inviting her guests, her husband started early to join the other shooters on a distant moor, not expecting to return till the evening. It was the first day on which he was pronounced sufficiently convalescent to take part in his favourite pursuit, and his wife feared he might suffer for his imprudence, but her remonstrances were unheeded.

She and Beatrix busied themselves with preparations for their entertainment in the evening, and the latter congratulated herself that a repetition of her last dinner-party was not likely to take place. She gave Mrs. Thorne a graphic account of poor Molly's shortcomings, who laughed heartily on hearing of them, and wished she had been present to enjoy the astonishment of the Mainwarings at what they probably considered a specimen of the ordinary manners and customs of the Irish at home.

"Well," continued Mrs. Thorne, "we will do all we can to make everything go off well this evening, but I wish I knew who this friend of Colonel Lestrangle's is. I hope he is not some grand London young man who will give himself airs, and look down upon us country people as quite beneath his notice."

"Never mind if he is," replied Beatrix; "we can leave him to himself if he does not care to speak to us, and it will save us all further trouble."

"He must take in Helen Macgregor," said Mrs. Thorne, "and my husband will have you, for he does not care for Cecily, and so she can sit on the other side of Colonel Lestrangle, which will do admirably. I wish we could do something to make the dinner-table look prettier. You see there are so few flowers in the conservatory here, and we have no hot-houses as at home."

"Never mind," replied Beatrix, "a happy thought has struck me. I will go up to the Craigmario Moor and find some of that beautiful stag's-horn moss, and that, with bunches of scarlet barberries, will look very pretty on the white cloth."

"Oh, thank you, Beatrix, that would be just the thing; but, really, I do not like you to go so far; you will never be home in time for dinner. I would send one of the men, only they have all gone with the shooters. Do take my maid to keep you company, for you really must not go all alone."

Beatrix declined this escort, preferring her own society, and departed without loss of time on the expedition which she knew would take some hours.

Craigmarlo was some miles off, but no stag's-horn moss could be found nearer. On she went, up the hill-side, and across the moor, at times knee-deep in heather, and at other times stumbling over rocks and stones, or wading through tall masses of bracken. At last she found the object of her search, and, with some difficulty, procured sufficiently long pieces of this graceful moss. Then she turned her face homewards, for it was growing dark, and she feared to miss her way ; but, before entering the gate at Glencolin, she paused to gather some of the brilliant barberry berries which grew near. Beside them she noticed a wild briar with dark blackberries and bright red and yellow leaves, which she could not resist gathering, though she knew it was very late, and Mrs. Thorne would be anxious on account of her long absence.

Her hostess met her in the hall.

"Come into the drawing-room, Beatrix," she said ; "I have kept some tea for you. The others returned a long time ago, and seem well satisfied with their day's sport ; they are in the billiard-room now."

"And how do you like Colonel Lestrangle's friend ?" asked Beatrix ; "is he as formidable as you expected ?"

"No," replied Mrs. Thorne, "I liked what I saw of him, though he seems very silent. But what treasures you have got there, Beatrix ! I never saw such beautiful moss, and such berries and leaves ! I will give them at once to Smith to arrange on the table."

Beatrix, however, reserved a portion for herself, and then escaped to her room, feeling there was not much time to spare before dinner.



She dressed hastily, the only ornaments which relieved her deep mourning dress being a necklace and bracelets of jet. Her toilette was finished, when her eyes fell upon the heap of moss and bright-coloured berries and leaves which she had brought for the purpose of decorating her room. She took up the blackberry leaves and disentangled them from their surroundings, then pressed them to her lips.

"For old sake's sake," she said softly, as she placed some in her hair and others in the front of her dress. Then she surveyed herself in the looking-glass, and memories of the last time she had worn them, and "of the days that are no more," came into her mind, and, for the moment, almost overpowered her. The tears came into her eyes, but she controlled herself, and, summoned by the gong sounding for dinner, she hastily left the room, and descended the staircase.

The black dress, relieved only by the colour of the leaves, became her to perfection. The long walk and bracing air had given a colour and animation to her face, which of late had been wanting, and as she entered the drawing-room, where, by this time, all the guests were assembled, Mrs. Thorne thought she had never seen Beatrix look half so handsome before.

"I wish I could arrange something for *her*," she thought, with her usual desire for making young people happy "but I expect she is one of those high-spirited girls who would be very impracticable."

"The late Miss Fayne," said Mr. Thorne severely, tw

ing to Beatrix, for, to enter the room after the gong had sounded, instead of before, was with him an unpardonable offence.

At these words, a gentleman, who was standing with his back to the door, talking to Miss Macgregor, turned round and started.

"Mr. Veryan, Miss Fayne," said his hostess.

Beatrix had by this time reached the centre of the room, and all eyes were fixed upon her in admiration. On hearing such an unexpected introduction, she paused, coloured, then turned very pale, and looked round for a seat.

"I think we have met before," said Audley Veryan, coming up to her, with his hand outstretched, on recovering his presence of mind, which had almost left him on this most unlooked-for *rencontre*.

"Yes," she replied faintly, but seemed unable to say more.

Every one looked on in astonishment, each weaving to themselves the romance which accorded best with their fancy.

"Come," exclaimed Mr. Thorne impatiently, offering his arm to Beatrix, "I do not know whether you are as ready for dinner as I am, but when one has been out the whole day on the moors one can admit of no delay. People talk of 'being as hungry as a hunter,' but I think the saying is equally applicable to shooters."

To Beatrix the dinner seemed interminable. Course after course went round, and yet appeared no nearer the end, and the time of her release. To sit there chained to

her seat exactly opposite Audley Veryan, every time she looked up finding his eyes fixed on her, and yet utterly unable to escape, appeared to her the most trying time in her whole life. She thought at first of pleading a headache, and retiring to her room, but then that would only draw the attention of every one to her, which she especially wished to avoid. She tried to attend to Mr. Thorne's conversation, to interest herself in the details of the day's sport, but her host soon found her attention was wandering. He had explained at full length how they had shot a roe deer, and brought it home, and he wished she could have seen it, as "it was a pretty little creature," but much to his surprise, Beatrix replied absently—

"Yes, its feathers are very pretty."

Her host stared in amazement, and then proceeded to devote himself to Miss Macgregor on his other side, who seemed much pleased at having any one to speak to, as Mr. Veryan, who had taken her in, had not addressed a single remark to her, and all her efforts at conversation had fallen to the ground.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

We shall behold each other in the light  
That maketh old things new, and dark things plain,  
And bitter sweet.

M. E. T.

AT last the long-wished-for moment of escape came. Never had a hostess's summons, "Shall we come?" conveyed such relief as did Mrs. Thorne's words to poor Beatrix. Now she thought she could effect a retreat for the remainder of the evening, and appear in public no more. She longed to be alone, for the unlooked-for appearance of Audley Veryan had almost overcome her, reminding her of the old days, and of the night at Templemore above all. She knew he would not willingly have met her again, that he would only feel indignation and contempt for her heartless conduct towards himself, and yet the one glance she took on first seeing him assured her that her own love for him was not quenched, as she had vainly hoped, but now re-awoke within her more strongly than ever.

They entered the drawing-room, and though she knew she ought to entertain the Miss Macgregors, she was about to leave the room, when Mrs. Thorne exclaimed—

"Oh, Beatrix, if you are going up-stairs, I wish you

would bring me down my diamond ring. I think it must be on my dressing-table."

Beatrix could not refuse, but the search for the ring took longer than she anticipated, for Mrs. Thorne's table was in such an untidy state that it was some time before she discovered it.

She hastened back to the drawing-room, but only to be again entrapped, by a request from Miss Macgregor to find her a needle and thread to mend her dress.

"I never saw any one with such a want of good manners as that friend of Colonel Lestrangle's," complained Miss Macgregor. "I saw his chair was on my dress as I got up from the table, and I asked him to move it, but he paid no attention until I had repeated it several times. He is certainly not accustomed to good society."

"I suppose not," replied Mrs. Thorne. "I do not know anything of him except that Colonel Lestrangle said he was with him in Colorado; perhaps he is an American. But I think you know him, Beatrix; he seemed surprised to see you when you entered the room, so very likely you can tell who he is."

"He is Lord Veryan's second son," replied Beatrix calmly, "and he used to stay with his sister, Lady Katherine Fitzgerald, who lives near Faynetower; we used to know him very well."

"Lord Veryan's son!" exclaimed Mrs. Thorne in dismay; "why, he must be an Honourable, and he ought to have taken me in to dinner. Really, Colonel Lestrangle ought to have told me," she continued reproachfully,

somewhat alarmed at her breach of etiquette, and the probable effect it might have on the mind of "The Honourable." She had hardly finished speaking when the gentlemen appeared.

Beatrix, who had been kneeling on the floor beside Miss Macgregor, mending her dress, rose hastily, and was about to retreat, when Audley intercepted her, saying—

"Why, Miss Fayne, you are not going to forsake an old friend? I have so many questions to ask you about Lady Fayne and the Everards, and Leo and all my old friends."

"They are quite well, thank you," she replied with her eyes fixed on the ground, and still standing, as if wishing to move towards the door.

"But you have not half satisfied my curiosity," he continued, placing a chair for her, and bringing another for himself close beside it.

Beatrix sat down mechanically, as though unable to resist his wishes.

"And now, let me tell you," he continued in a low voice, seeing that they were at some distance from the others, "how deeply I have felt for you in all you have gone through since those happy old days. I hope Irene gave you my message."

"Yes," was all Beatrix could reply. He little knew from that answer how she had clung to his words as her one ray of hope in the midst of her late troubles, how she had carried it everywhere with her, and how Irene's letter, containing this postscript, was even now resting on her beating heart as she sat beside him.

"I wanted to have written myself," he said, "but I was afraid it might seem intruding upon your sorrow."

"Thank you," she replied gently, at the same time raising her eyes to his. She saw them fixed upon her with an ardent gaze of love such as she could not misinterpret, but which revealed to her in a moment his unchangeable devotion.

"Beatrix," said Mr. Thorne, approaching them, "we want some music, and the Miss Macgregors say they are too shy to sing unless you begin first, to inspire them with courage. Come and sing something to us."

"Certainly," replied Beatrix, rising instantly, though she felt unequal to such a demand upon her, and at such a moment.

Fortunately, Mr. Thorne was short-sighted, and did not therefore see the indignant glances cast upon him by Audley, who also rose and followed Beatrix to the piano.

"What shall it be?" said Beatrix, turning to her host, who had taken up his position on the hearth-rug, with his back to the fire and his hands behind him.

"Douglas," replied Mr. Thorne promptly; "by all means let us have that song you gave us last night about 'Douglas, tender and true.' Upon my word, I said to Mrs. Thorne afterwards, I had never heard you sing anything half so well."

"No, no; not 'Douglas,'" said Beatrix in a low voice,

hastily turning over her music to conceal this song, which lay uppermost upon it.

"Why not?" asked Audley, taking it up. "I wish you would sing it, Miss Fayne, for it is one I am very fond of."

"I would rather not," replied Beatrix, somewhat confused.

"But you could sing it to the little Fitzgeralds," he continued persistently; "Dorothy told me so, but she did not seem to appreciate it, for she said, 'it was very sad that Mr. Douglas would not come back when he was wanted.'"

"Dorothy did not tell you about that day?" asked Beatrix hastily, her face becoming crimson, though she turned away from him to hide it.

"Yes," said Audley in a low voice, "all about it; and I am very glad she did, for it was the first thing that gave me hope."

"Come, come," exclaimed Mr. Thorne impatiently, approaching the piano; "Mr. Veryan, I cannot allow you to monopolise Miss Fayne altogether; we are all very anxious to hear her sing, and you seem equally anxious to absorb her in conversation."

Thus recalled to her duty, Beatrix seated herself at the piano, and without further delay began a little French song which she knew was a favourite with Mr. Thorne, and which, she hoped, would pacify him for her refusal to sing the first he had chosen.

When this was ended, she resigned her seat and went to Mrs. Thorne, who was still engaged in upbraiding



Colonel Lestrangle for neglecting to inform her of the rank of his friend. Colonel Lestrangle seemed much relieved by her appearance, and hastily escaped to join his favourite Miss Macgregor, who was seated alone on a sofa near the piano; her sister was meanwhile playing some well-known Scotch airs, making sufficient noise to cover any amount of confidences.

This was thoroughly to Mrs. Thorne's satisfaction, and, emboldened by the success of this little plan, she ventured on another manoeuvre, which, fortunately, proved equally satisfactory.

"Beatrix," she said, "we must show Mr. Veryan the conservatory;" and, turning to Audley, who was close at hand, she continued, "I have no doubt it does not equal Lord Veryan's at Endellion, but still we are rather proud of it."

Having delivered herself of this allusion to his rank, Mrs. Thorne felt much relieved, and proceeded to lead the way into the conservatory, followed by Beatrix and Audley. It was dimly lighted by coloured lamps hanging from the roof, which shed a soft light on the flowers around, while a delicious scent of heliotrope and jasmine pervaded the air.

After doing the honours of the place, Mrs. Thorne returned to the drawing-room. Beatrix was about to follow her, when Audley placed himself adroitly between her and the door, and, turning to a plant near him, said—

"Can you tell me the name of this flower, Miss Fayne?"

Beatrix stooped to examine the label attached to it,

but finding it difficult to decipher in the dim light, took it nearer to one of the lamps in a corner of the conservatory to enable her to read it better.

"You still wear a remembrance of old times," said Audley in an altered tone, looking at the leaves she wore in her dress and hair.

"Yes," said Beatrix softly, looking down upon them as though not wishing to meet his passionate gaze, "I am very fond of them."

"And so am I," he replied. "Do you remember how you gave me some long ago in the wood at Faynetower? I have preserved them ever since, and they have been with me in all my wanderings."

He paused, but she made no reply.

"Beatrix," he continued passionately, "I have tried hard to forget you, knowing you did not care for me, but it has been in vain. Wherever I went I could think only of you. I have never loved any one but you, and never will. Is there no hope for me? Can you not promise to love me, even ever so little, in return?"

She raised her eyes at last, and looked at him earnestly, then looking down, she whispered almost inaudibly—

"But can you forgive the past?"

"Dearest," he replied, taking her hand in both of his and pressing it to his lips, "I have nothing whatever to forgive."

"Indeed you have," she said in a trembling voice, as her tears fell fast.

"My darling," he replied, "all was forgiven long ago, and the pain of that time is now forgotten in this great joy. You will not give me the same answer if I ask you now?"

She paused for a moment, and then, bending down her beautiful head, kissed the hand that lay upon hers.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

Through suffering and through sorrow thou hast passed  
To show us what a woman true may be.  
They have not taken sympathy from thee,  
Nor hath thy knowledge of adversity  
Robbed thee of any faith in happiness,  
But rather cleared thine inner eyes to see  
How many simple ways there are to bliss.

LOWELL.

"I HAVE a piece of news for you, mother," exclaimed Irene Veryan one morning a few days after the event recorded in the last chapter. "What do you say to having a daughter-in-law?"

"A daughter-in-law, my dear Irene!" replied Lady Veryan. "What can you mean? Audley is never going to be married!"

"Yes, mother," said Irene, smiling. "You may well be astonished, but it is quite true. He is engaged to Katherine's friend, Miss Fayne, of whom you have often heard us speak."

"To Miss Fayne!" exclaimed her mother. "But where has he met her? I thought she lived in Ireland, and Audley, so far as I know, is staying with his old friend, Colonel Lestrangle, in Scotland."

"So he is," replied Irene; "but he writes to tell me that he went with Colonel Lestrange to stay with a Mr. and Mrs. Thorne, who have a moor near, and there he met Beatrix Fayne, who is a cousin of Mrs. Thorne's, and the consequence was that he proposed and she accepted him, and they mean to live happily ever after!"

"This is a surprise," remarked Lord Veryan, who entered the room at that moment with an open letter in his hand. "Audley writes to tell me he is engaged to an Irish girl, a Miss Beatrix Fayne, and to ask my approval. I am greatly astonished, for I had never heard of her before in my life, and I never thought Audley was one to fall in love at first sight, or to be so easily caught. I wish we could find out something more about her, for it does not do merely to rely on the description given by a young man in love. I really cannot give my consent to such a thing. He ought to marry some one we know something of, not a penniless Irish girl no one has ever heard of."

"I think Irene knows her," interposed Lady Veryan. "She tells me that Miss Fayne is a friend of Katherine's whom Audley used to admire when he stayed in Ireland. I remember Katherine speaking to me of her, and saying she thought he had lost his heart in that direction,—an assertion I could hardly believe."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Lord Veryan angrily. "I have no patience with a young man who falls in love with every girl he sees. Katherine ought to have known better than to encourage him in such a fancy. I shall write and tell him to think better of it, and if he wants

marry and settle down in life, why, let him choose some nice quiet girl like Miss Howard, who has plenty of money besides, though perhaps you cannot exactly call her good-looking."

"Certainly not, father," said Irene, laughing. "You need not lay any plans in that quarter, for Audley declares that all the 'nice quiet girls' we have to stay here only bore him inexpressibly.

"I think Miss Howard is a very superior person," remarked Lord Veryan sternly. "I have always set my heart on that match, and I do not want Audley to be so easily caught."

"But to show you that Audley was not caught, as you imagine, I think I may tell you that he proposed to Beatrix when we were last in Ireland, and she refused him,—why, I cannot tell, for I believe she cared for him all the time, and he was devoted to her. This made him unhappy, and unlike himself, after our return home, until he wished to go off to Colorado and forget her altogether. His attempt however was unsuccessful, for when he came back I found he cared for her as much as ever. I am delighted to find he has met her unexpectedly, and that all has come right between them."

"That's all very well, Irene," replied Lord Veryan, "from a romantic point of view, but you must expect me to look at a thing practically, as Audley's father, and I certainly think he might have done better."

"But, father," said Irene, "his happiness is the first thing to consider, and I know you will like and value her

when you know her well ; besides, I cannot help wishing that Audley should be as happy as I once was when you gave your consent to my engagement to Cecil. For my sake, father," she added coaxingly, "don't place too many difficulties in the way, but let Audley at least be happy."

Lord Vervan kissed her and left the room without replying, but she knew from his expression that she had gained her point.

"But do you think she is the kind of girl one would like Audley to marry?" asked her mother doubtfully. "I remember Katherine seemed to like her, but from what I gathered she seemed to be just a handsome high-spirited Irish girl, and nothing more."

"Yes," replied Irene, "so she was, but I always felt she had the making of a noble character, and I believe this has been developed by all the sorrow she has gone through lately ; anyhow, Audley seems in the seventh heaven of happiness, so we must write and congratulate him, and also do all we can to welcome her among us."

Soon after this conversation Irene left the room, and went up-stairs to her little boudoir, but before beginning to write to her brother and Beatrix, she sat down on the low window-seat and looked out at the beautiful landscape before her, all glittering brightly in the morning sun. The trees in the park were gradually assuming their autumn foliage ; the cattle were grazing quietly under their shadows, the river beyond flowed on calmly, reflecting the blue sky above and the white clouds in its waters ; but Irene's eyes rested on none of these objects, beauti-

though they were. She looked beyond them all to a range of distant hills stretching out along the horizon, so distant that their outline was almost lost in the dim purple haze that shrouded them.


"The land that is very far off," she said softly to herself, "the distance and dimness of those hills always has a fascination for me. They seem to remind me of that land into which Cecil has entered. If only we could have been happy here, like Audley and Beatrix!"

Tears she found it impossible to restrain filled her eyes, as she thought of him she loved so dearly, now separated from her by death, never to meet again until she too had crossed the dark valley, and rejoined him on the other side.

It was easier to bear now than formerly, but at times when anything brought her loss vividly before her, the sorrow would awaken, and assert itself in all its old power, while her endeavours to bear it bravely, and resist the temptation of giving way to hopeless grief, became more difficult to carry out.

Lady Vryan entered the room softly, and going up to her daughter placed her arm round her and kissed her forehead.

"My poor child," she said tenderly. Irene turned, and hiding her head in her mother's breast gave way to the grief she could no longer control. After a few moments she grew calmer; her mother did not attempt to comfort her in words, but gently drew her closer to herself, while she smoothed her hair with a loving touch, feeling that this





mute expression of sympathy was all that her daughter could bear at such a time.

"Dear Irene," she said at last, "I always feared you would feel Audley's marriage whenever it came, for you and he have been so much to each other. I fear you will be very lonely without him."

"Not while I have you, dear mother," replied her daughter affectionately, looking up into her mother's face.

"But your father and I will not be always with you, my child, and I cannot bear the thought of leaving you all alone in the world."

There was a pause, but presently Lady Vervan continued—

"Irene, I cannot help saying that I often wish you would, after a time, think of marrying—not yet certainly—but perhaps in a few years. I am sure poor dear Cecil would not have wished you to go on mourning for him all your life."

"Mother," said Irene, withdrawing the hand Lady Vervan held fondly in hers, "do not, I entreat you, mention this subject to me again; you know how fully my mind is made up upon it. But I shall not 'go mourning all my days.' Even at present I generally feel calm and happy; and I believe life will become easier and brighter for me as time goes on. Each day brings our meeting nearer."

"But I think you would be still happier if you were married and had a home of your own, Irene, though I know your father and I would be very lonely without you."

"I have never yet crossed your wishes, mother

replied Irene firmly, "but I must ask you in this to allow me to decide for myself. One thing, however, I will promise you, and then we will not again mention the subject: if ever I meet any one whom I can love better than Cecil Leighton, I will marry; but till then, 'forsaking all other, I will cleave only unto him' as long as I live."

Her mother was silent, feeling that Irene's character, though gentle, was very decided; and when once her mind was made up, her resolutions were unalterable.

"I only wish for your happiness, dear child," she said at length; "and I cannot bear the thought of having to leave you to spend the remainder of your days as a solitary old maid."

"Never mind, mother," said Irene, smiling; "I am very young still, so I shall not be old for many years to come, and when I am, I shall not be solitary."

"You mean you will live with Audley?"

"Oh no!" exclaimed Irene, "nothing was further from my thoughts. I have no intention of being a typical maiden aunt living in her brother's house, and interfering with every one. I shall take a little house of my own, making it as pretty as possible, and one which will be regarded by all my friends as a haven of rest, a little nook of brightness and comfort, where I shall always be glad to welcome them. Even at present my life is full of work and interest, so that I never find the time pass slowly. I shall be an ideal 'old maid,' universally beloved and respected, carrying out the French maxim, '*La bonhomie, c'est la coquetterie des vieilles filles.*' Audley will

be married, while I remain single ; but we will both, I believe, be equally happy in our respective lines of life."

"That reminds me," said Lady Veryan, "that I must go and write to him, dear boy ! I am sure I hope he has made a wise choice."

She left the room, and Irene, opening the window, gazed out at her favourite view.

She stood for a long time lost in thought.

"'Until the day break and the shadows flee away,'" she said at length, rousing herself. "It may not be much longer after all, dear Cecil, before we meet again, and until then I will remain faithful to you."









